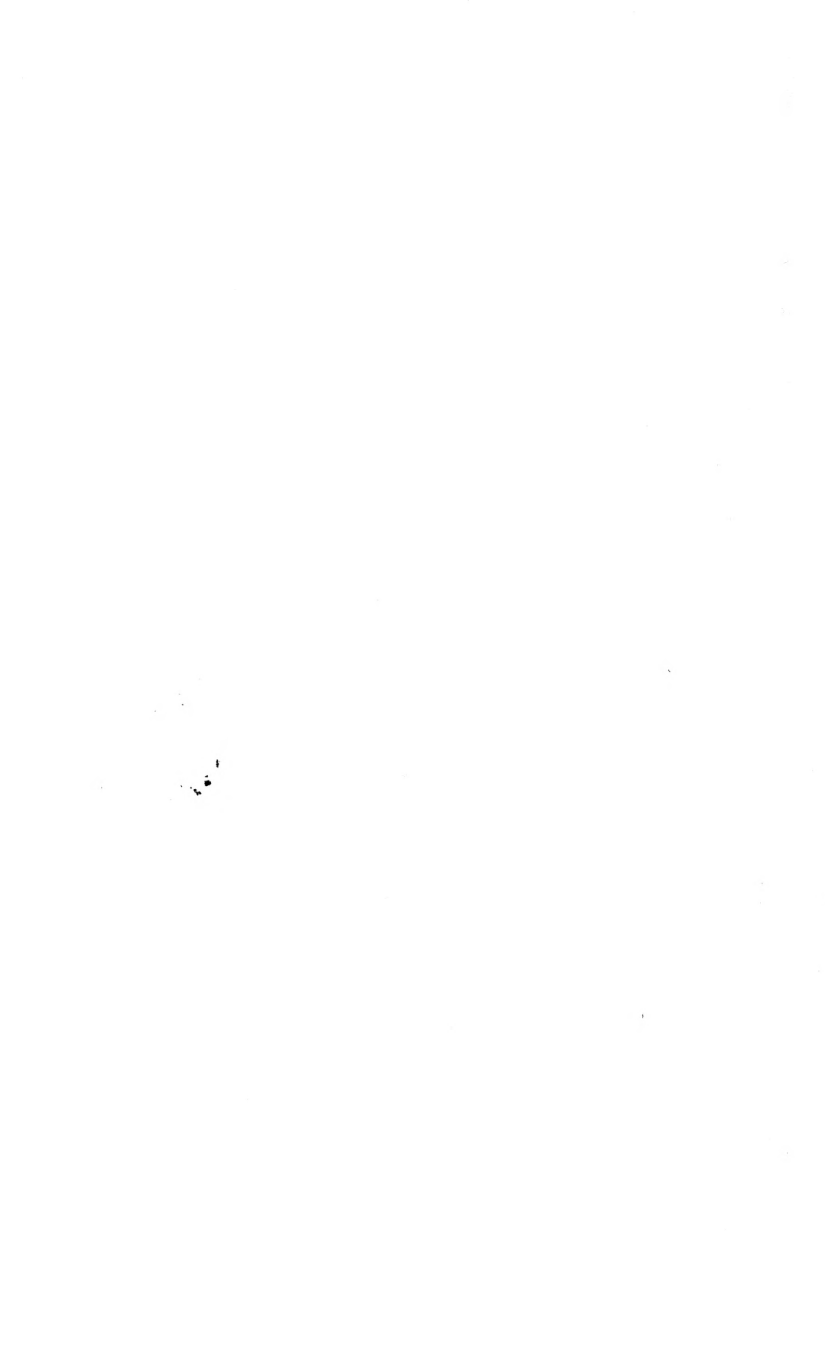


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NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE
CONGREGATION OF PRIESTS OF
SAINT BASIL — COLLECTED BY
ROBERT JOSEPH SCOLLARD, CSB

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1940 — 1966



C O N F E R E N C E S

1940 - 1966

relating the history

of the

Basilian Fathers

by

Robert J. Scollard
C.S.B.

1966

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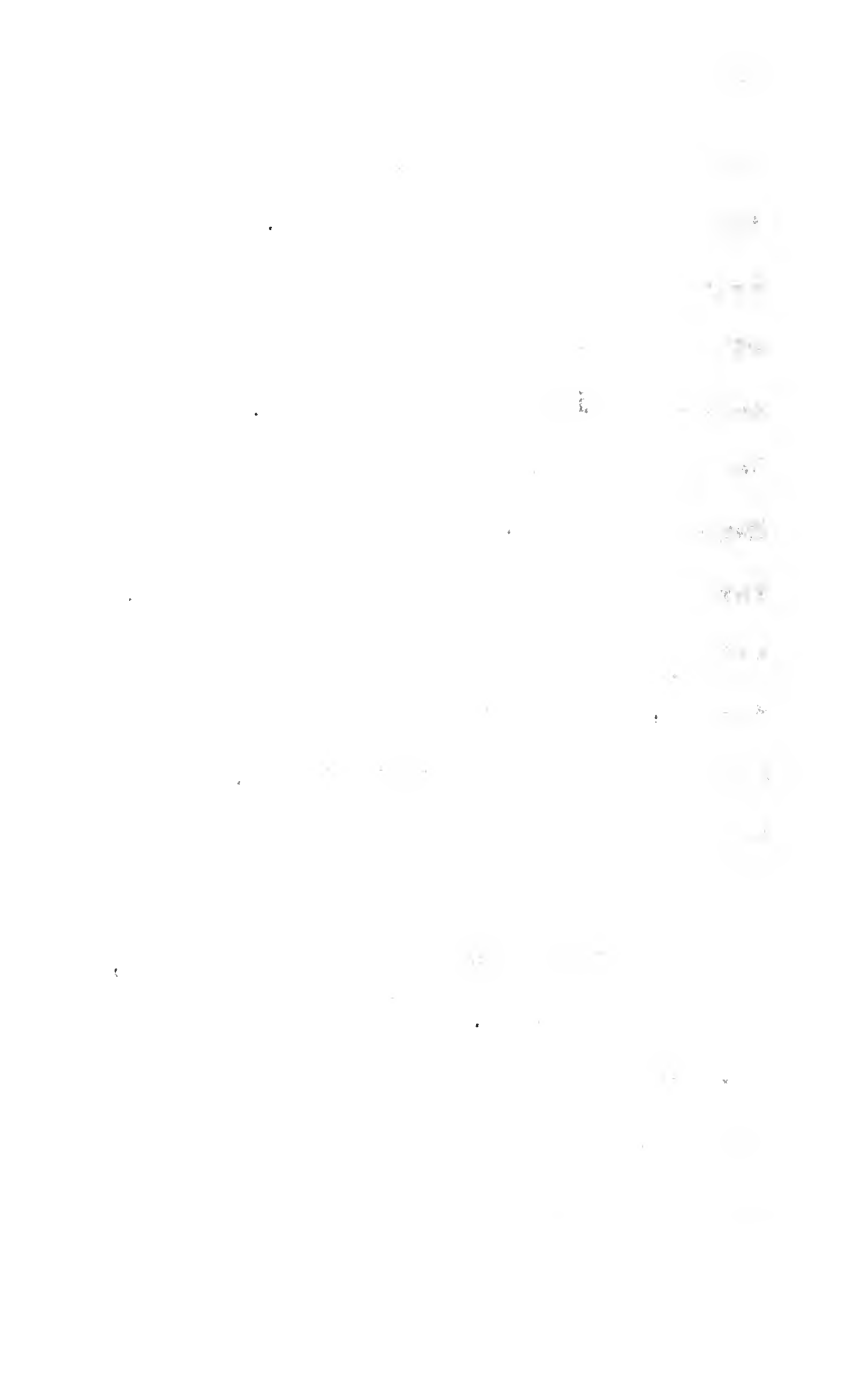
If you have read your Vademecum carefully, and are gifted with a retentive memory, you will recall on page 96 a sentence of Father Julien Actorie:

"If one could fuse them all into a single characteristic feature, the manifold character of our venerable departed brethren, we should have before our eyes the perfect model of the true Basilian"

It will be the task of this conference to sketch briefly the lives of our Founders, not as a matter of factual information, but as examples of the virtues required in the state of life they embraced and in which we are following --- that of religious in a community of priests whose principal work is education.

Let us begin with Father Joseph Lapierre, the first Superior General. He was a

priest of great zeal, a model of order and method in temporalities. Although he had received a good education and was head of a teaching community he had little aptitude for teaching, indeed he always retained a preference for parochial work. He kept for his part the administration and organization, tasks for which his talents were better suited, and entrusted the actual classroom duties to his associates. Father Lapierre was born in 1757 while Canada was still a French Colony and the United States was partitioned among England, France and Spain. He was ordained in 1782 at the age of twenty-five and until 1792 there is little to distinguish his life from that of any fervent young



priest. In that year his uncompromising denunciation of irreligious opinions forced him to hide from the fury of the French Revolution. The next six years were passed in secret ministry. In 1798 he was appointed pastor of St. Symphorien and while still in hiding laid the foundations of the first Basilian school. In 1822, when financial difficulties threatened this work and his chief associate actually withdrew, he consented to abandon his own financial interests in the work and to join a new religious community. At a time when habits are deeply rooted and men look forward to spending their remaining years in less exacting work — he was then forty years ordained — he

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assumed the obligations of religious life and was chosen first Superior General. The Community was small and working in hostile surroundings, but the work that it accomplished was such that several bishops petitioned the Holy See to grant it recognition and on September 15, 1837, Pope Gregory XVI granted it the full decree of praise. It is from that date we take our precedence in the ranks of Congregations of men with simple vows. This decree was the crowning point in Father Lapierre's life of eighty-one years. The following year he was called to his eternal reward, leaving behind a reputation as a humble man of retiring disposition.

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Our second Superior General was a different type. He was urbane, affable, a good conversationalist, a preacher much in demand, a teacher thrice decorated by a government now less unfriendly to religious teachers. He was a born administrator and a man of initiative. Enterprising, he had been most active in the establishment of the Congregation and when he was seventy years old did not hesitate to deplete his small flock by sending teachers to the missionary diocese of Toronto. Father Pierre Tourvieille was born on June 5, 1780. During the French Revolution it was his duty to attend to the needs of an elder brother who was a priest in hiding. In this work he first showed that prudence which was so noticeable later on. He

began his course in Theology at St. Symphorien in 1802 and was ordained priest on July 14, 1807. He soon became noted for his preaching and from 1820 to 1845, a period of twenty-five years, his summer vacation was a succession of retreats. He was an able confessor, one could bring back fallen Catholics. Although he never heard them during their student days, many of his old pupils made him their regular confessor. In 1838 he was chosen second Superior General, and held office until his death in 1859. He was the first to insist that Basilian teachers should be fully trained university graduates.

The priest who had the chief role in the negotiations preceding the estab-

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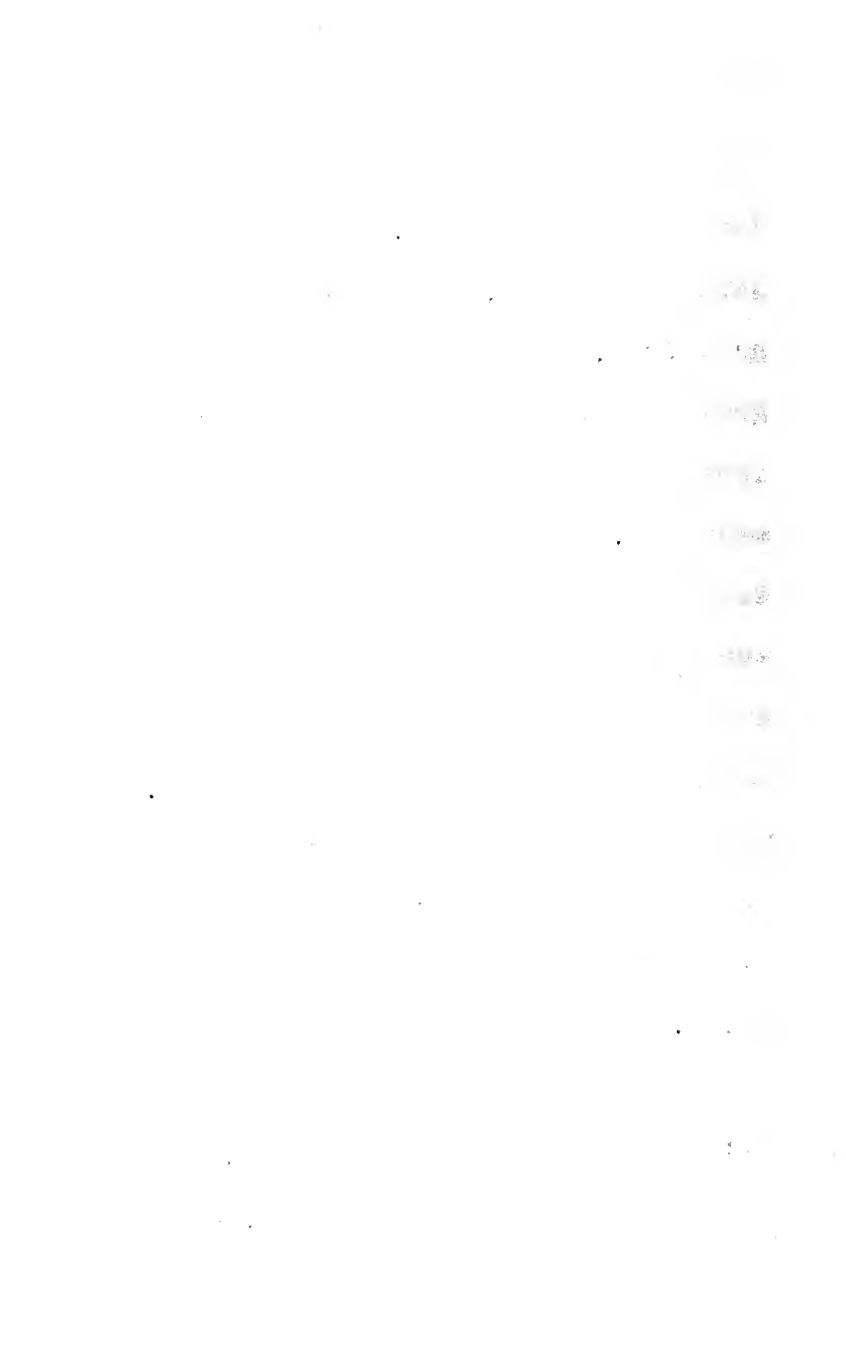
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lishment of the Community in 1822 was Father Vincent Duret. The son of a noted physician, he was born at Annonay on July 3, 1762; took his Master's degree at the University of Paris; and then made his course in Theology at the Sorbonne. While he was still a sub-deacon he was made a canon of the Chapter at Notre Dame d'Annonay and after his ordination 1886 he returned to Annonay to begin his priestly work. He was forced to fly during the French Revolution and later returned to be a leader in the restoration of religion there. His zeal in fostering priestly vocations first brought him into contact with his future confreres. First he sent some students to them, then he

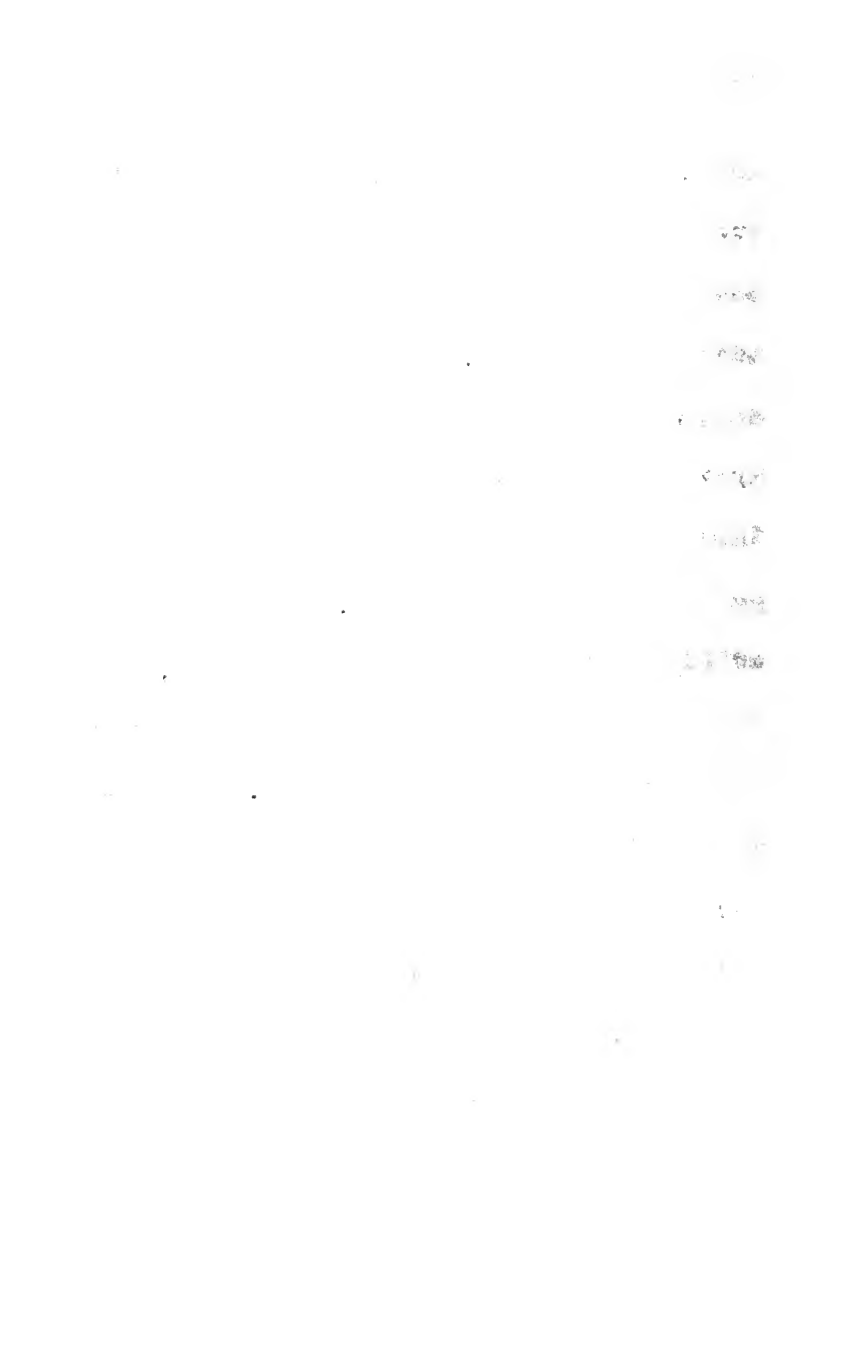


opened a house where poor boys could live while studying at the College. In 1816 he resigned his parochial work to give his entire attention to this work. He possessed a modest income from family property and his personal resources were multiplied indefinitely as friends came to his aid. On the other hand there was nothing of luxury in this house and only by the strictest economy did he keep it going. He was chosen Assistant General in 1822 and remained in this office until his death in 1841. Like Father Lapierre he was of a modest and retiring nature.

The priest among our Founders who personified goodness to the students was Father Augustin Payan. Gentle and aff-



able, he made it a point to take the evening recreation with them and he possessed a fund of entertainign and edifying stories. It is probable that on more than one occasion he told them of his experiences when he was denounced during the French Revolution and spent an anxious week in jail. He was born in 1771 of rich but pious parents, and was ready to begin Philosophy when the Seminaries were first closed. He escaped military conscription during the Revolution by reason of an ailment that suddenly appeared and as suddenly disappeared, to reappear again two years before his death. He was particularly enthusiastic about the establishment of a religious society and won over some



of the younger teachers to the project. To it he made a substantial contribution of 6,000 francs, the equivalent of twelve years salary before the Congregation. His angelic piety was attractive and for thirty years he was spiritual director to the majority of the pupils. From 1825 to 1832 he was Director of Studies, but from 1832 until his death in 1847 he was able only to hear confessions and serve as a convent chaplain.

Quite a different man was Father Jean Baptiste Polly. Where Father Payan worshipped love and mercy, he worshipped justice. Severe to himself, he presented a rather brusque appearance to others. He was born at St. Symphorien in 1772

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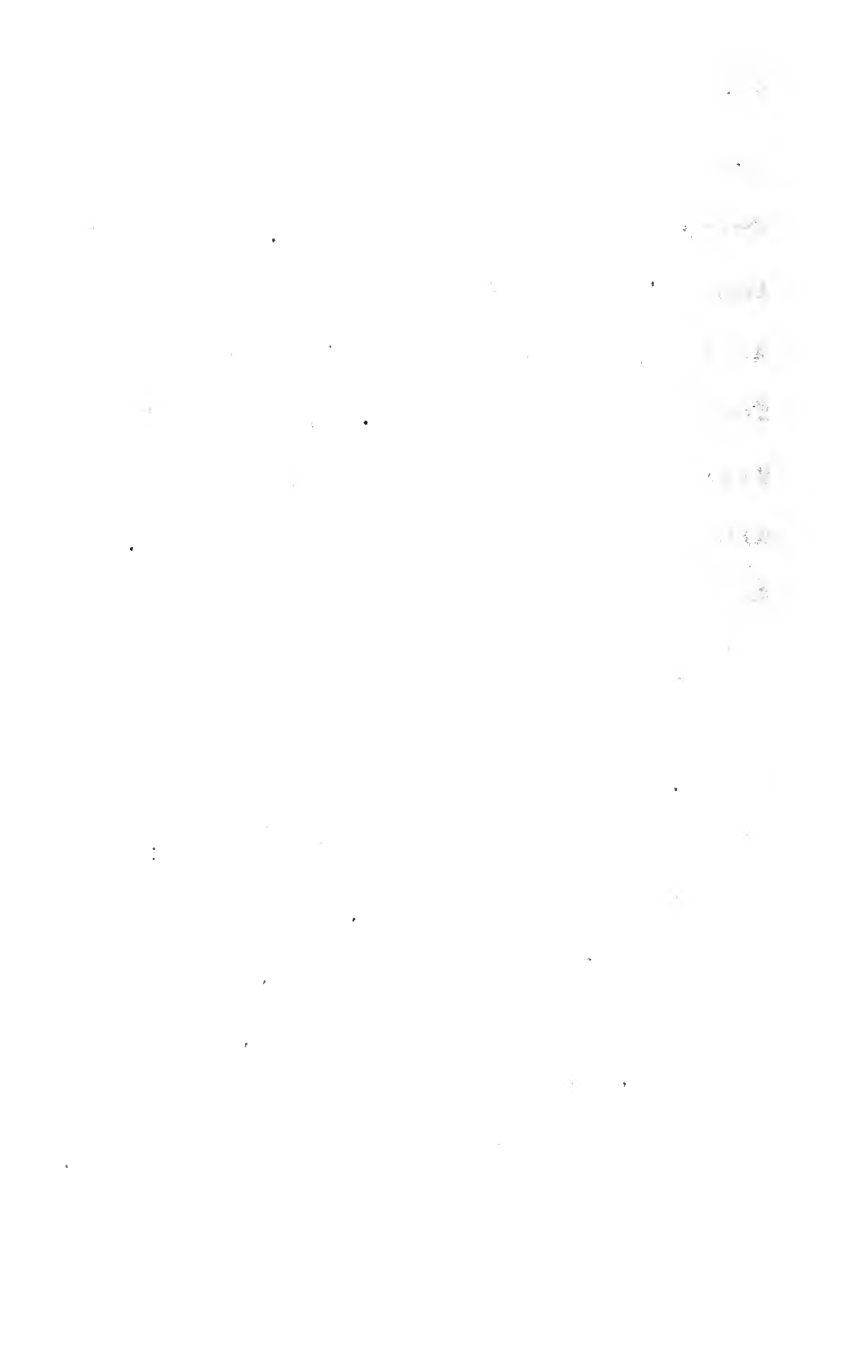
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and was in third year theology when the French Revolution broke out. After his father's death in 1793 he succeeded him as Mayor and in this office proved a friend to many priests. When soldiers visited the district he welcomed them with open arms and open wine cellar. He drowned their grief at finding no priests in the only possible way and won a reputation for loyalty to the cause. In 1798 he recieved the subdiaconate under wartime conditions: in the middle of the night, in a barn with the windows blacked out, only the servers and ordinandi present, Archbishop d'Aviau carrying a wooden crozier and wearing a mitre of gilded cardboard. Two years later he was ordained priest



and until 1806 engaged in parochial work. From 1806 to 1822 he was science master and professor of philosophy at Annonay and when the Congregation was founded became our first theology teacher. He held this post until his death in 1847 and won a local reputation for solving difficult cases of conscience.

Father Jean Pagès was a tall, grave, austere man. He was a lover of the Rule and a man of penance. Every summer he spent at least two weeks in a Trappist monastery. He was born in 1793, ordained in 1819 and passed one year in parochial work before making teaching his life work. He taught successfully for thirty years and then took up chaplain work until his death in 1861. He

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undermined his health by penances and lived only 68 years, the least of all our founders. He wore a hairshirt, took the discipline, rose at 4:00 a.m., and in Lent for many years ate only one meal, usually after the last class.

Father André Fayolle was a nephew of Father Tourvieille. Born in 1792, he came to Annonay about 1802 or 1803. In 1822 he was appointed Superior of the new school at Maison-Seule, in the parish of St. Basil, and from whence we got our name. Since the Superior General was also Superior of the College at Annonay, Father Fayolle was the first Local Superior in the Community. In 1824 he was moved to a house at Privas and remained there as Superior until

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his death in 1867. He excelled in prudence and tact, and in consequence for over forty years enjoyed good relations with civil authorities in turn Restoration, Monarch, Republic and Empire.

The youngest of our Founders in 1822, Father Julien Tracol, was also the oldest at the time of his death and it is to this disposition of Divine Providence that we owe most of our information on the early days. Father Tracol was born in 1796, enrolled at Annonay in 1808, was ordained priest on March 28, 1819, began to keep a diary in 1833 and died in 1885. When he first desired to enter the ecclesiastical state his father judged him too young and put him

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to work for nearly two years before granting him permission. The first year after his ordination was spent in parish work but then his attraction for a life in common caused him to return to the College of Annonay as a teacher. In 1837 he was appointed Director of Studies, and in 1842 indifferent health forced him to stop teaching. He then served as choirmaster and sacristan, and as the opportunity offered gathered material for the history of the College. He was a holy man and after his death an account of his life was written at Annonay.

Two of the ten Founders did not remain in teaching. After ten years of teaching Father Henry Martinesche retired to

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Vaudevant where he died on February 24, 1879. Until 1864 he came to Annonay for the annual retreat. The other was Father Jean Antoine Vallon, a member of the pioneer staff at St. Symphorien. He came to the school immediately after ordination. In 1827 he left the College at Annonay to spend his remaining days in parochial work. He died in 1840. He was severe to himself, a model in observance of the Rule. He led a holy, mortified, penitential life. Feared by the students, for twenty-five years he was recreation master, showing himself a stern disciplinarian who exacted absolute obedience. Brief as they are, these individual biographies are fuller than the avail-

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able account of their community life. While still diocesan priests engaged in teaching, they followed a Rule of Life prescribing prayer, examen, spiritual reading and all the Office except Little Hours in common. No doubt the passing years and especially the organization of the Congregation introduced changes and additions; but the only one mentioned is that whereas before 1822 they received a salary of 500 francs, from then on they received 200 francs for their personal expenses.

As we look back we can see much out of the ordinary in their lives. Certainly they lived in a difficult time, yet for them it was a simple case of following the graces they received. Perhaps if

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they had been more faithful they might have done greater things. At any rate they had the confidence of the bishops with whom they came in contact; they merited the praise of the Vicar of Christ on earth and in their very lives we may see a mark of God's approval for only one died under seventy and on an average they labored 78 years in this world. Had their work been displeasing, unsatisfactory, it is not likely that they would have been granted such long lives. In the words of St. Paul, they cry to us: "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." In them we can find models for our particular way of life and on the supernatural principles that guided theirs, we should strive to conduct ours.

(Conference to the scholastics at St. Michael's College, Toronto, March 1940)

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The subject for this conference is the obituary list printed last Spring. It is a matter of more than mere historical interest because the names of our deceased confreres should, especially during this month, call to mind our duty of suffrages for the repose of their souls. At the same time the list may help to prolong the influence of the good example they gave while alive.

The present list is the third in the history of the Congregation in America. In France there exists an official record of obituaries but I do not know whether a general and public list was ever compiled.

The first of the three lists was the one that formerly hung on the wall of

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the College Community Room. When I first saw it, it occupied a place on the east wall of this room, just inside the door. This list was kept in chronological order. When a confrere died, his name with the date of his death was added to the list. However, the first part of this list was not a contemporary record. It seems to have been compiled shortly after 1889, probably by Father Victorin Marijon, i.e. twenty-five years after the first Basilian burial in St. Michael's Cemetery. It had an entry given as 1889 which belonged in 1878. It is quite possible that this list was compiled shortly after Father Charles Vincent's death, November 1, 1890. He was the last of the pioneers,

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a former provincial; and by the time of his death thirteen members who had been active here had died. Certainly the list appeared to be old and the entries after this date seem to be a contemporary record. In the course of time the list grew to four columns framed in two fairly large frames. It had become unwieldy and due to the growth of the Congregation threatened to become even more so. When Brennan Hall was opened in 1938 this list was allowed to disappear.

The second list is simply a printed copy of this manuscript list down to April 1930. The occasion of the printing was the tragic death of Father Francis Forster. On a few copies two

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deaths during 1931 have been printed. This list was a little folder and the intention was to print another column on the fourth page. I hope that the extra copies have been lost because the list had undergone very little editing and repeats some errors from the manuscript list which should be corrected.

The third list differs radically from the preceding lists. The order is no longer chronological by date and year of death, but rather by month and day of death. Its purpose is not to record the passing of confreres, but to recall their anniversaries. It cannot be added easily, but must be entirely reprinted — a fact of great advantage since it, too, has need of corrections, eight that

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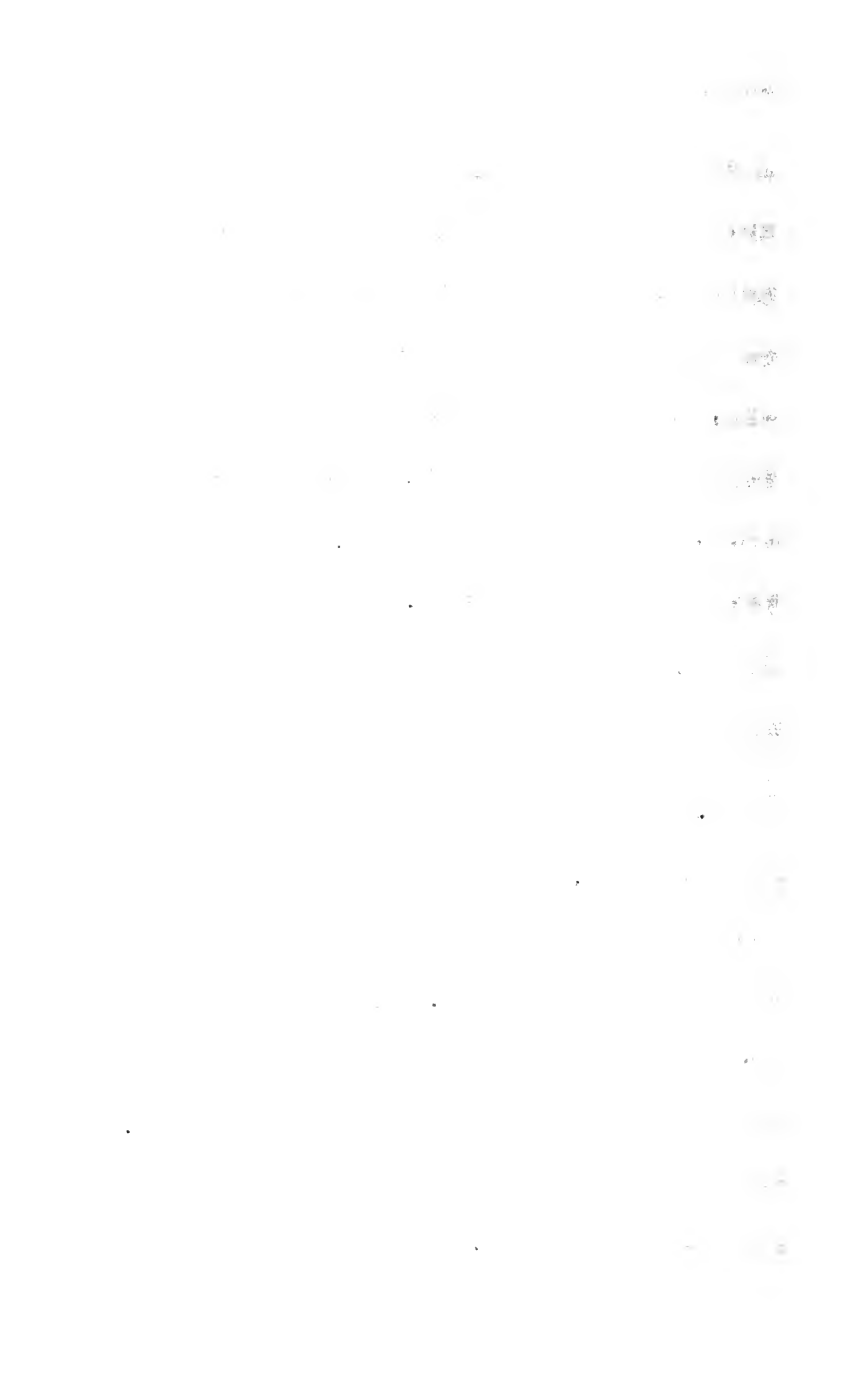
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I know of so far. The old list had the advantage of grouping generations together, because while one confrere might die young and another live to a very old age, the majority would be fairly close together on the list. To compensate for this in the new list, the year of birth has been added.

The drawing up of the new list was complicated by the decree of separation in 1922. Who belonged to this Province? For example, Father Victorin Marijon lived here for thirty-one years but he went back to France. This difficulty was partly solved by the fact that I could not find the date of his death. Then there were some who left the Congregation in 1922. They have been



omitted although years of work within the Community does give them some claim to our prayers. All whose names were on the old list have been included, and also some who lived within the Community even though they did not take the vow of poverty as defined in 1922. When the list is re-issued at some future date, it is possible that it will be made wider in scope and include some names now missing.

Once the list of names was compiled, the next step was to verify the date of death. Next the date of birth and full baptismal names were sought. These tasks have been only imperfectly fulfilled. The community records are not complete. We are not alone in this.

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St. Michael's Cemetery does not know officially of some of our burials there. The Basilians in France have been helpful whenever I wrote to them, but due to present conditions they now owe me an answer. At that, their records are not perfect. When official records are incomplete the information had to be sought elsewhere, from the family when possible, and in the last resort even from a newspaper report. I believe that I have finally obtained all the dates of death, but there are still about a dozen years of birth that are pure guesswork, though I hope within reasonable limits.

The dimensions of the list are such that it is supposed to fit any medium sized

breviary or missal. A thin paper has been used so that it will turn with the pages. The hope was that it would be kept in such books and used to recall at least the anniversaries of our confreres.

To make the list more meaningful to you, I would like to say something, briefly, about the scholastics whose names occur in this list.

Charles Francis Roe was born in Detroit on November 19, 1916. He attended Catholic Central High School and after graduation entered the Novitiate in 1934. He pronounced his first vows on September 12, 1935 and began the study of Theology in September 1938. He died

in St. Joseph's Hospital, Toronto, on Sunday, March 26, 1939, and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. Death was caused by complications following the removal of his appendix. You remember his appearance, by no means a light weight and just that much the more cheerful and obliging.

John Richard Moffit was born in Louisville, Ohio, on March 3, 1853. He attended the Basilian College there, St. Louis College, and when he graduated in 1872 entered the Novitiate which was then located at St. Michael's College. Afterwards he was on the College staff and died at the College in the morning of April 2, 1876. He was buried in St. Michael's Cemetery. Mr. Moffit was the

only vocation from St. Louis College during our six year operation of it.

Joseph LEO Normandeau was born on April 22, 1917. He received the habit on August 14, 1935, and died in St. Joseph's Hospital on April 21, 1936. He was the first novice to die and be buried in our plot in Mount Hope Cemetery. It is a curious fact that the youngest and the oldest, Mr. Leo Normandeau and Father Robert McBrady, lie side by side.

Gerald George was born on July 24, 1905. He made his novitiate during 1931-32 and died at Assumption College on May 1, 1933. He was buried in Assumption Cemetery, Windsor. He was married, perhaps the first married Basilian, had

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two children, and after his wife's death made provision for them before going to the Novitiate.

Eli Morllaret died on July 5, 1881, and was buried at Assumption, aged 26. The year 1855 is a guess for his birth. He made his Novitiate with Father A.P. DuMouchel at Assumption College in 1879-80 and had Father Michael Ferguson as Master of Novices.

Gerard McCarroll was born on July 18, 1914. He entered the Novitiate in September, 1938, and died at St. Joseph's Hospital, Toronto, on August 26, 1939, following a lingering illness. He was buried at Alliston.

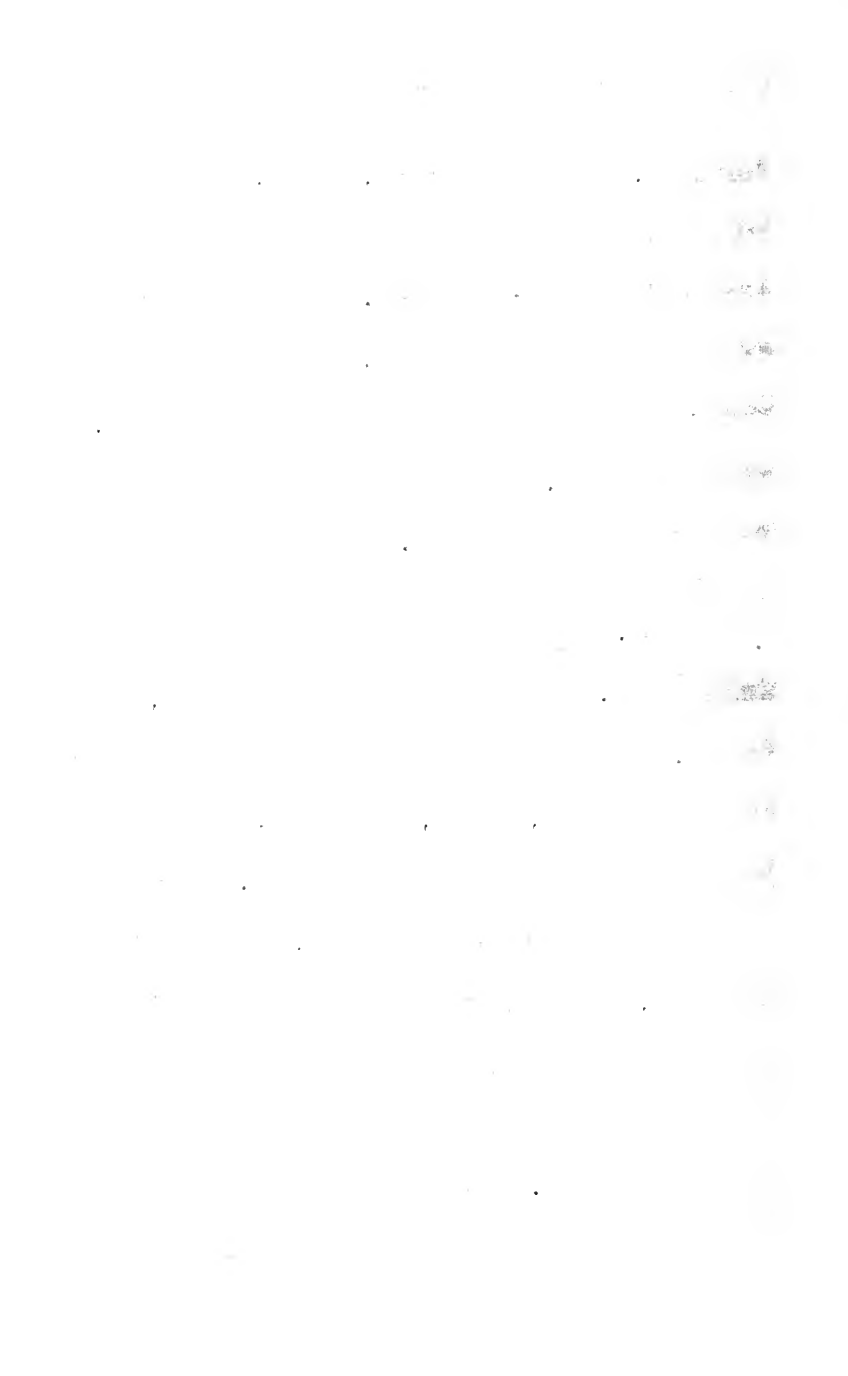
George Barry Cotter died on September

22, 1875. A native of Toronto, he was nicknamed mouse for some reason or other. He enrolled at St. Michael's College in 1863-64 and won the good conduct prize, Junior Section, 1864-65. He was buried in St. Michael's Cemetery. If I have the story correctly his mother later entered the Convent, either St. Joseph's or the Precious Blood.

Joseph EDWARD Tallon was born at Cornwall on February 17, 1897. Before going to the Novitiate in 1921 he had served in the Canadian Army, attended the Ontario College of Education, and taught for one year at Assumption College. He was ordained subdeacon on September 19, 1925, and died in St. Michael's Hospital,

Toronto, on October 16, 1925, following an attack of pneumonia after an operation for appendicitis. He was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. His picture in the community room is a composite one, his own face, but Father Robert Lowrey from the collar down.

Thomas J. McGwann was a nephew of Father John Ryan. He was born at Cobourg, Ontario, and died of influenza in Windsor on October 25, 1918, aged 28. He was buried in Assumption Cemetery. A graduate of the class of 1913 at St. Michael's College, he had attended the Ontario College of Education and taught for two years at De La Salle before going to the Novitiate. At the time of his death he was in second year theology.



Joseph Lodato was another scholastic who died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. He was born at Niagara Falls, New York, in 1894; attended Woodstock Collegiate Institute and then Assumption College. He was admitted to first vows on August 13, 1916. He died on November 7, 1918, and was buried at Assumption.

James Leo Ruth was born near Hepworth in St. Mary's Parish, Owen Sound, on March 12, 1911. He came to St. Michael's College in 1930 and received the religious habit on August 16, 1931. He died in St. Joseph's Hospital, Toronto, from appendicitis on December 15, 1934, and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery.

Michael F. O'Gorman was for long the

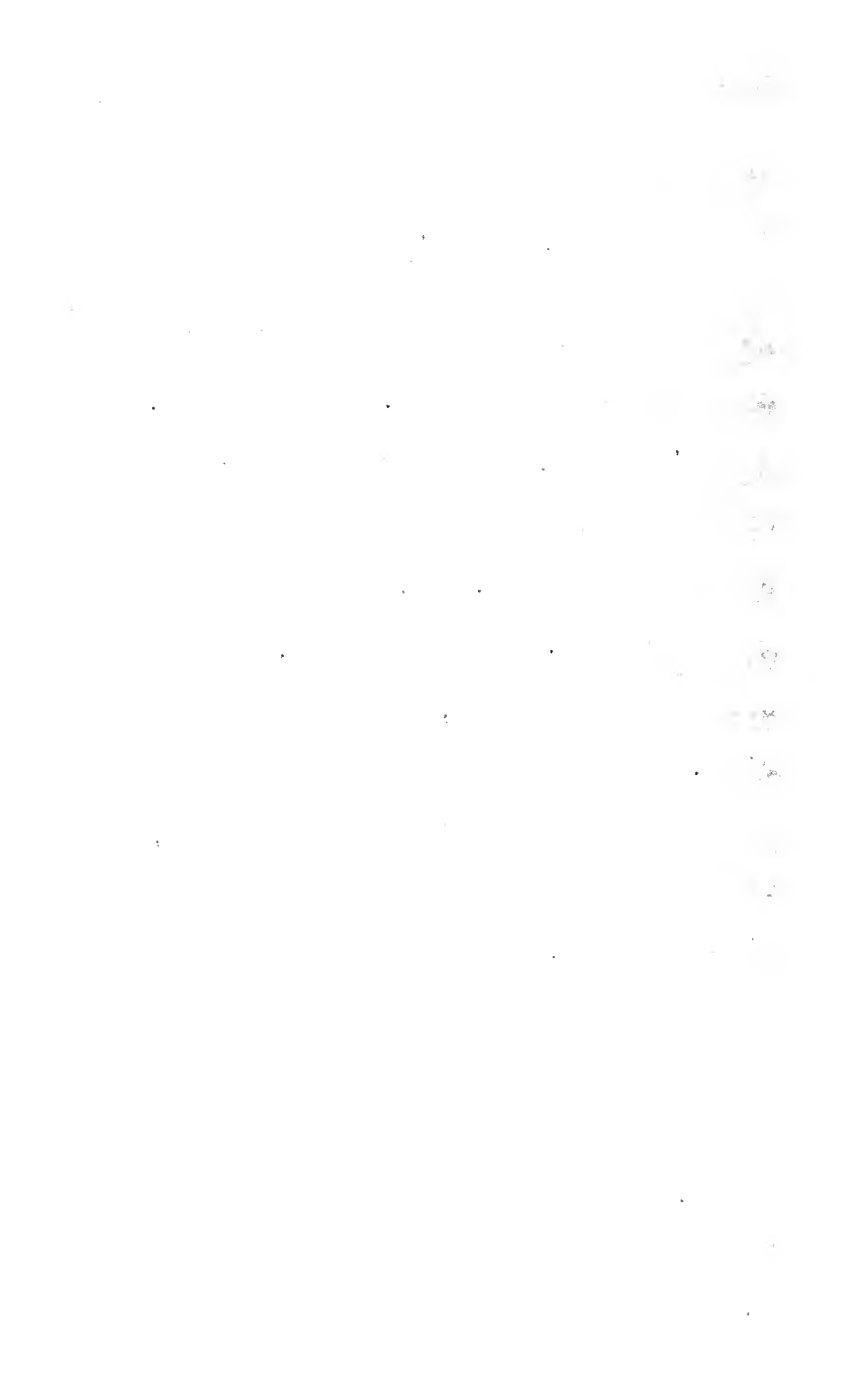
mystery man of the Community. The old list gave January 1889 as the date of his death. This did not agree with his being on the pioneer staff of Assumption College. He was a native of Toronto, born in 1847. He entered the Novitiate at St. Michael's College on August 15, 1873 with Fathers Daniel Cushing and Michael Mungovan. A few weeks later the Novitiate was transferred to Assumption College and he was taken out of the Novitiate to teach. He continued at Assumption College and died there on December 31, 1878, from tuberculosis. Because he had never completed his novitiate he was not buried in the Basilian Plot of Assumption Cemetery but in a plot with others who had served

Assumption. Mr. O'Gorman was a clever mathematician and whenever confreres from St. Michael's mentioned Father Teefy's medals from the University of Toronto, those at Assumption College would expand on the talents of Mr. O'Gorman. He was cheerful and joked even on his death bed. He was a special friend of Fathers Michael Ferguson and Michael Mungovan.

(Conference given to the scholastics at St. Michael's College, Toronto, November 1941)
1941

THE SERVERS AT MASS AND BENEDICTION IN
ST. BASIL'S SEMINARY

It is the custom in most seminaries to have reading at meals. Here in St. Basil's Seminary we are reading at the evening meal a book recommended by Father McCorkell. It is a new biography of St. Francis Xaver, written by the English Jesuit, Father James Brodrick. Because timetables frequently put classes at twelve o'clock noon, it is not practical to read a book at the mid-day meal. Those who must take their meal at an earlier or a later hour lose the trend of the reading when it continues from one day to another. For this reason Father Lajeunesse introduced the custom of reading articles from the periodicals received by the



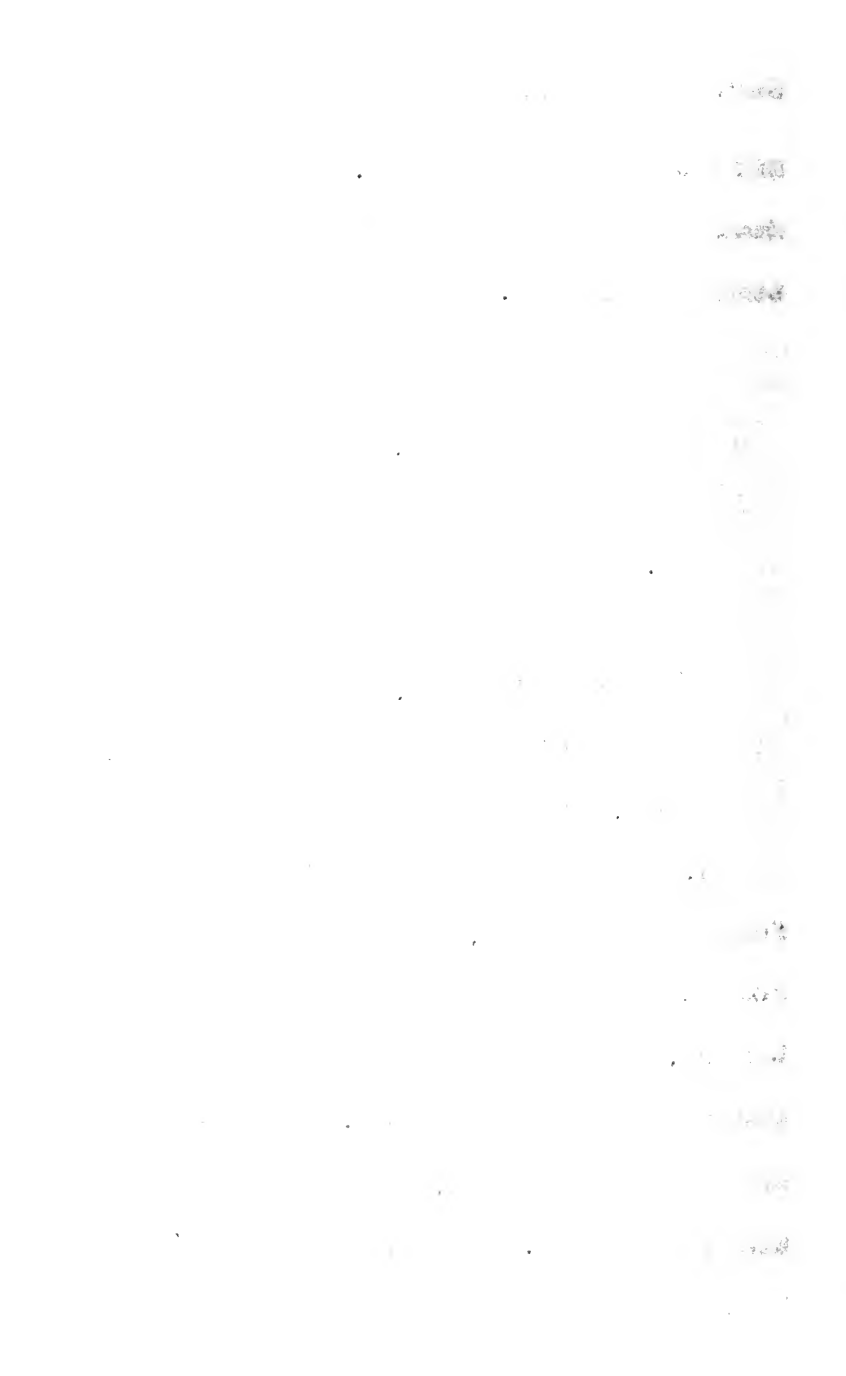
Seminary Library. Two months ago Father Monaghan picked an article for noonday reading. Its title was one that you might expect from a Treasurer, "Raising Money." The writer of this article is employed by the Public Relations Department of a large American University. In his article he did not give away any secret formula for raising money. The point of the article was, "How to say thank you". He emphasized that when an institution received a gift, it must try to give the donor satisfaction for the money received by showing them how it was used. You have been devoted to the Seminary Chapel. Members of the Auxiliary have given generously of time and money towards it. Tonight, I would

like, by way of a small return, to show you how your interest in the Chapel has helped St. Basil's Seminary.

In the Seminary, the scholastic learns, among other things, how to say Mass, how to give Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and how to celebrate the feasts of Holy Church. Tonight I would like to tell you about the program of such instruction in St. Basil's Seminary. At 21 St. Mary Street, the chapel was small and the sanctuary quite inadequate for the full observance of the solemn services of the Church. There the scholastic was trained and practiced in the saying of Low Mass, but for the greater ceremonies, practical training was not possible. He received little

more than book knowledge. In the new Seminary the splendid chapel has removed that difficulty.

Most of the scholastics stationed here are studying Theology, but some are still in Undergraduate university courses. Those who are in Arts courses take their turn at serving Low Mass in the Auxiliary Chapels, but at the Main Altar they serve only as torchbearers. Last year, when this custom was introduced, one scholastic who is over six feet tall told me, "When I was barely able to see over one of your library tables, I became an altar at home and was put carrying a torch. I could hardly wait to be promoted, and now I have to start all over. Some of you may know him, Mr. Arthur Kirn.



Six torchbearers serve at the Solemn Mass which is celebrated every Sunday morning during the academic year for the benefactors, living and dead, of the Seminary. They also serve at Solemn Mass sung on Holy Days and on the feasts of the Patrons of the Basilian Fathers. In the evenings they serve at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on Sundays and at Solemn Benediction on the greater feasts of the church year.

Because a torchbearer is a beginner, and because a small mistake in the beginning can bring on big mistakes later on, the torchbearers must practice for their part. On Friday, or on Saturday evening as may be more suitable,

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they give up some minutes of their evening recreation and in the chapel practice leaving their pew, lining up across the sanctuary in a straight line, genuflecting together, and walk-in pairs to the sacristy to get their torches. The censerbearer is in charge of them. Before they leave the sacristy to come out into the sanctuary he must check to see that they are holding the torch with the proper hand, and that they carry them at the same height. If a scholastic carries his torch in the wrong hand, if he walks out of line, if he holds his torch too high or too low, he is apt to hear about his mistake.

Torchbearers serve for two weeks at a time. During these two weeks the two

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junior by profession look after the communion cloth. Father Orsini has followed the practice of other seminaries and the scholastics receive not at the step that sets the sanctuary apart from the choir, but at the top step of the altar. The junior torchbearers stretch a cloth across and hold it while all receive. Afterwards they fold it and put it back on the credence table.

The first step above torchbearer is not acolyte, as it was for Mr. Kirn and for I suppose practically every member of the Congregation. An acolyte in St. Basil's Seminary is one who has been ordained for that office by the Bishop. The Order of Acolyte is the highest of

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the Minor Orders and the exercise of it here is reserved to those in Third Year Theology. These are, of course, ordained acolytes. The first step above torchbearer is Censerbearer. Scholastics in First Year Theology serve as censerbearer. Second Year Theology provides the Master of Ceremonies. Like the torchbearers, these all serve for a two week period and like the torchbearers they must practice for their part.

Training for this period of service is threefold, by reading, by observation, and by practice. Each scholastic knows well in advance when his turn to serve will come. He is expected to prepare for it by reading over his duties in

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"The Book of Ceremonies" written by Father Laurence J. O'Connell. Father O'Connell was Master of Ceremonies at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago. His book reflects American practice. It gives instructions for each office, separately and in some detail.

The second step in the preparation is observation. This comes one week before serving. On the Sunday before his turn to serve, the scholastic assists at the Solemn Mass from the top gallery. From it there is an unobstructed view of the altar. Seven in all will be watching the Mass from that gallery. First will be the Master of Ceremonies, Beside him will be a scholastic who specializes in ceremonies and who will point out things

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and who will also make notes of the mistakes committed by those actually serving. Next to this scholastic will be the new censerbearer. The centre place is for myself, and while keeping an eye on things in general, I watch more particularly the subdeacon, deacon and celebrant. To my right will be another trio, composed of the next pair of acolytes and another assister master of ceremonies. After the Mass three meetings will be held in my library office. The first one, held immediately after the Mass is attended by the master and the censerbearer who have actually served and by the incoming master and censerbearer and by the scholastic who was making notes on mistakes. At the

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meeting the mistakes are gone over and special difficulties are discussed. At 11:15 a similar meeting is held for the acolytes, and at 11:40 one for the sacred ministers. Since Christmas the last two meetings have been combined and are used to help the acolytes who will be ordained in June get an early start on the sacred ceremonies they will be called upon to carry out within a few months. The following Sunday the roles are reversed: those who watched now serve and those who served now watch. On the third Sunday a new group watches while the servers complete their second week of serving. The cycle comes to a close on the fourth Sunday with a second turn at observation. Thus

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each scholastic watches one week, serves two and closes with watching on the forth week.

Like the torchbearers, these serves give up some of their recreation to practice. On Saturday evening, after supper, the celebrant, deacon, subdeacon, master, censerbearer and acolytes meet in the main sacristy and then practice at the main altar in the chapel. The purpose of this practice is to co-ordinate the movements of the different servers and to give them their exact location in our sanctuary.

For special ceremonies, e.g. the Mass of a Bishop, ordinations, etc., the training is limited to reading instruc-

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tions and to one or more practices.

Scholastics in Third Year Theology prepare for the celebration of Low Mass by the same system of reading, observation and practice. They watch the priests of the House say Mass. They read the instructions given by Father O'Connell in his "Book of Ceremonies". And they have practices. Once a week they practice as a class to secure uniformity in their bows and other actions. Once or twice a week they practice in private. For this they work in pairs, one goes through part or all of the Mass while his partner watches and corrects him.

Perhaps this sounds a little elaborate. I assure you that it is needed to take

even a good altar boy and teach him how to carry out his priestly functions. Whenever you notice confusion in the sanctuary, you may be sure that either reading or practice was omitted. There is a small point which I am sure you will appreciate. This year the Solemn Mass on Sundays is taking about five minutes fewer than last year. The reason is simply this: after one full year of practice, observation and reading, the ministers do not have to stop and recall what to do next, nor do the servers keep them waiting.

I am very glad to have had this opportunity of telling you about the system used in St. Basil's Seminary for training scholastics in the carrying out of

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the liturgical ceremonies. This program has been made possible by the new chapel. Your special interest has made it equal to that of any seminary in Canada. When next you meet an acquaintance who is interested in another seminary, on this point you will not have to take a back seat. Perhaps it will also help you to appreciate Father Monaghan's position. There are still some appointments needed for the perfect observance of all the great feasts and he will have to call upon you to provide them.

(Talk given at a meeting of St. Basil's Seminary Auxiliary, January 21, 1953)

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It is difficult to begin a conference to confreres. Perhaps the best thing is to pass up any attempt at an introduction and to get down to business immediately. The General Rule states that the Visitor represents the Superior General and it is of this delegation that I wish to touch on briefly.

To understand what this means, go back to the time of the first monks. At an early date three monastic rules began to stand out as being more important than the rest. The first of these in point of time is that of St. Basil, composed in the fourth century. Speaking of superiors he proposes to them the example of humility set by Our Lord Who was in the midst of men as He Who



serveth. In the 30th question of his Long Rules St. Basil wrote:

His rank should not arouse feelings of pride in the superior, lest he himself lose the blessing promised to humility... He will fulfill the aim which the Lord had in mind when He said, "If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all and the minister of all." (Mark 9,34)

In the 43rd question of these Long Rules, he directs that the Superior:

should be kind and patient with those who from inexperience fall short in their duty, not failing to reprove them for their sins, but bearing gently with the intractable and applying remedies with all kindness and moderation.

The Rule of St. Augustine has this same thought that the superior is a servant:

Your Superior, however, should consider himself happy not so much in exercising authority over you as in having the opportunity

of serving you with charity... He should cheerfully embrace regular discipline himself, but be cautious in imposing it on others. Though both are necessary, he should prefer to be loved rather than feared; never forgetting that he will have to render an account to God for every one of you.

St. Benedict in his famous Rule has this to say about the Abbot:

Let him know that it is his duty rather to profit his brethren than to preside over them... Let him hate ill-doing but love the brethren... Let him study to be loved rather than feared.

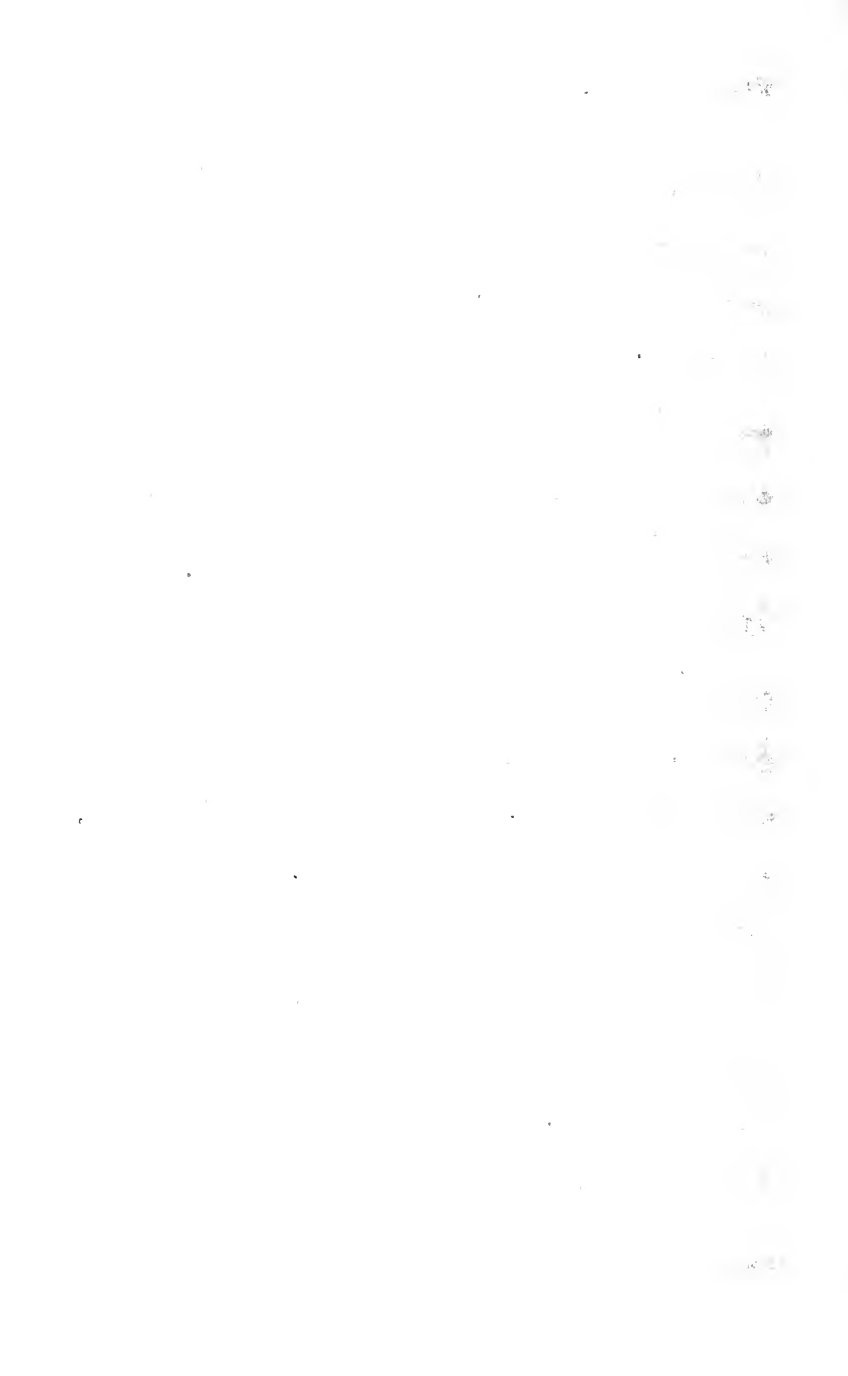
The views expressed in these early Rules have influenced all forms of religious life. On this point it will be enough to quote Father Louis Lalle-mant, a Jesuit who lived in the first third of the seventeenth century:



Good superiors consider themselves possessed of power and authority only to do good to their subjects and lighten their burdens, not to injure and inflict mortifications upon them.

The religious formation that our Superior General received from Father Wilfrid Sharpe during his novitiate year, together with his natural disposition have given him the qualities required in a Superior by the authors of these famous monastic rules. During the visitation, I shall try to approach it. Any appointments for seeing the visitor will be inspired by this motive, and if the time allotted does not permit a satisfactory talk, another opportunity must be arranged.

What is the purpose of a visitation.



Recently I received a letter from a confere with this sentence in it: "I hear that we are to have a visitation. I have my list ready." To understand the origin of this attitude, we must go back to another and more recent period in the history of religious life.

At the time of the Reformation there were many priests for whom the priesthood was merely a profession. Work for souls and their duties to God held a secondary place in their mind. Good priests during the Counter-Reformation reacted against the worldliness of such priests. Among them was St. Philip Neri who founded the Oratorians in 1564. The Oratorians were secular priests who

lived in community. Each contributed a monthly sum towards the general expenses; only their lodging was given to them by the House. They were bound by no vows, and they were free to leave the Oratory whenever they pleased. Today the Oratorians number 127 priests. The great desire of the Oratorians in Italy was to work for the reform of the secular clergy.

The Oratory was founded in France in 1611 by Father Pierre, later Cardinal, de Berulle. The Oratory that he founded had a distinguished history and today has produced Father Louis Bouyer, a remarkable spiritual writer. Nevertheless its lasting importance comes

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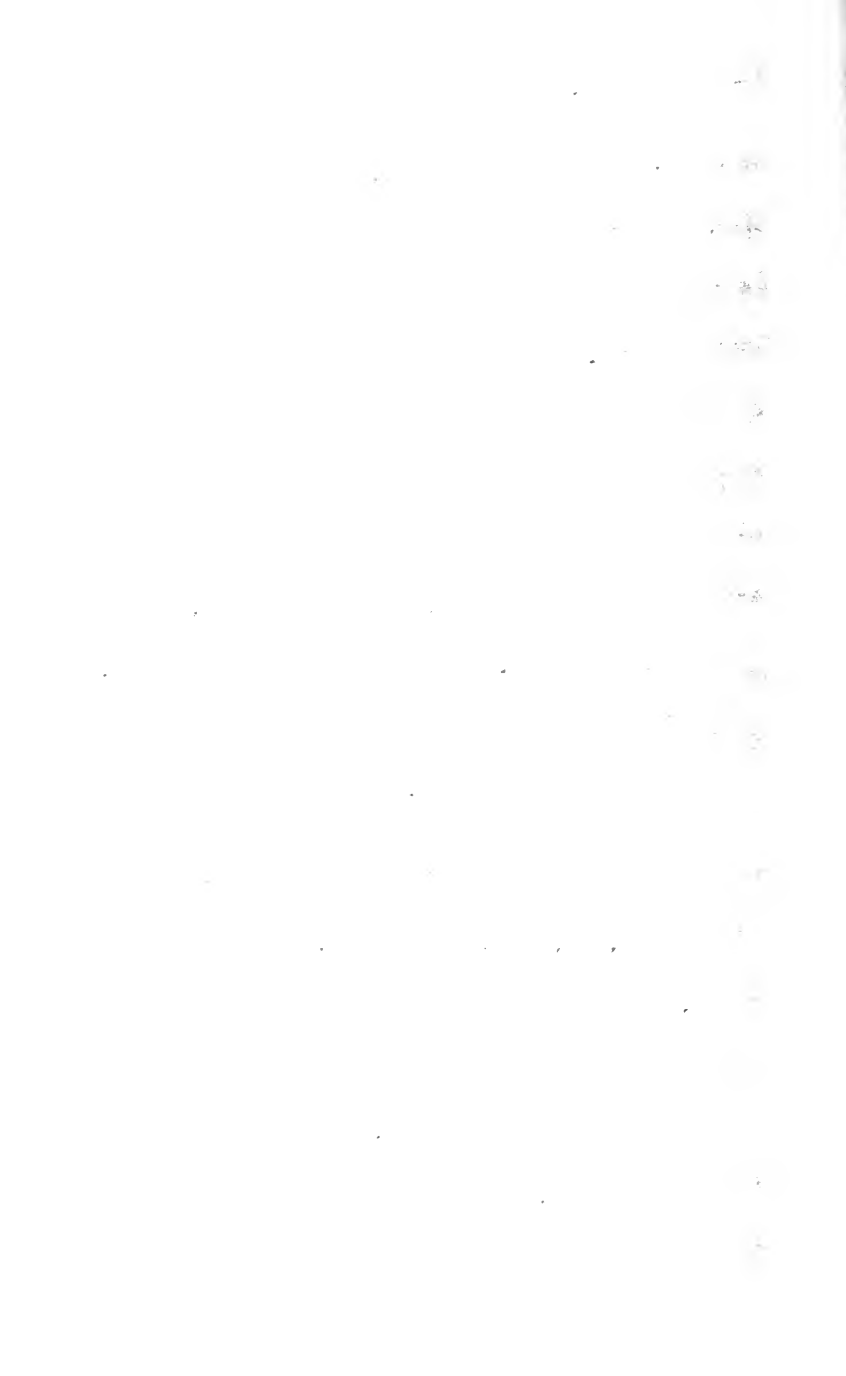
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not from its own work, but from three communities that sprang from it and which now surpass it in numbers and in influence. After a comparatively short time the work of training and spiritualizing the clergy in France passed from the hands of the Oratorians into those of the Vincentians, the Eudists, and the Sulpicians. Like the Oratorians, all three are religious societies without public vows.

The largest group is the Company of the Missions, 5,425. For St. Vincent de Paul, the first and essential work of his community was the evangelization of the country people, and when engaged in this work, they also endeavored to reform the local clergy at the same time.



St. John Eudes withdrew from the Oratorians because they were withdrawing from the direction of Seminaries to teach in Colleges and he wanted to be a member of a Community devoted to the work of Seminaries and by this means to work for the reform of the clergy. To-day the Eudists number 585.

Unlike St. Vincent de Paul and St. John Eudes, Father Olier was never an Oratorian. He prepared for ordination by a long retreat under St. Vincent de Paul, and later took for his spiritual director Father Charles de Condren, Superior of the Oratory. Sulpicians live with their disciples, perform all their spiritual exercises with them, take their meals with them, and spend

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their recreations with them. Their principal work is the direction of Seminaries, though they do some missionary work and have charge of a few parishes. Today they number 629.

Basilian spirituality derives from that of the Sulpicians. Like the other offshoots of the Oratorians, the Sulpicians were anxious for the reformation of the clergy, and so in our Rule it presumes that the Visitor may have occasion to enact reforming regulations. To assist him in this some prepare their list. Many Basilians expect changes when a Visitor comes and express regret afterwards if they are not made. Certainly when an early Vincentian, Eudist or Sulpician appeared on the scene, the

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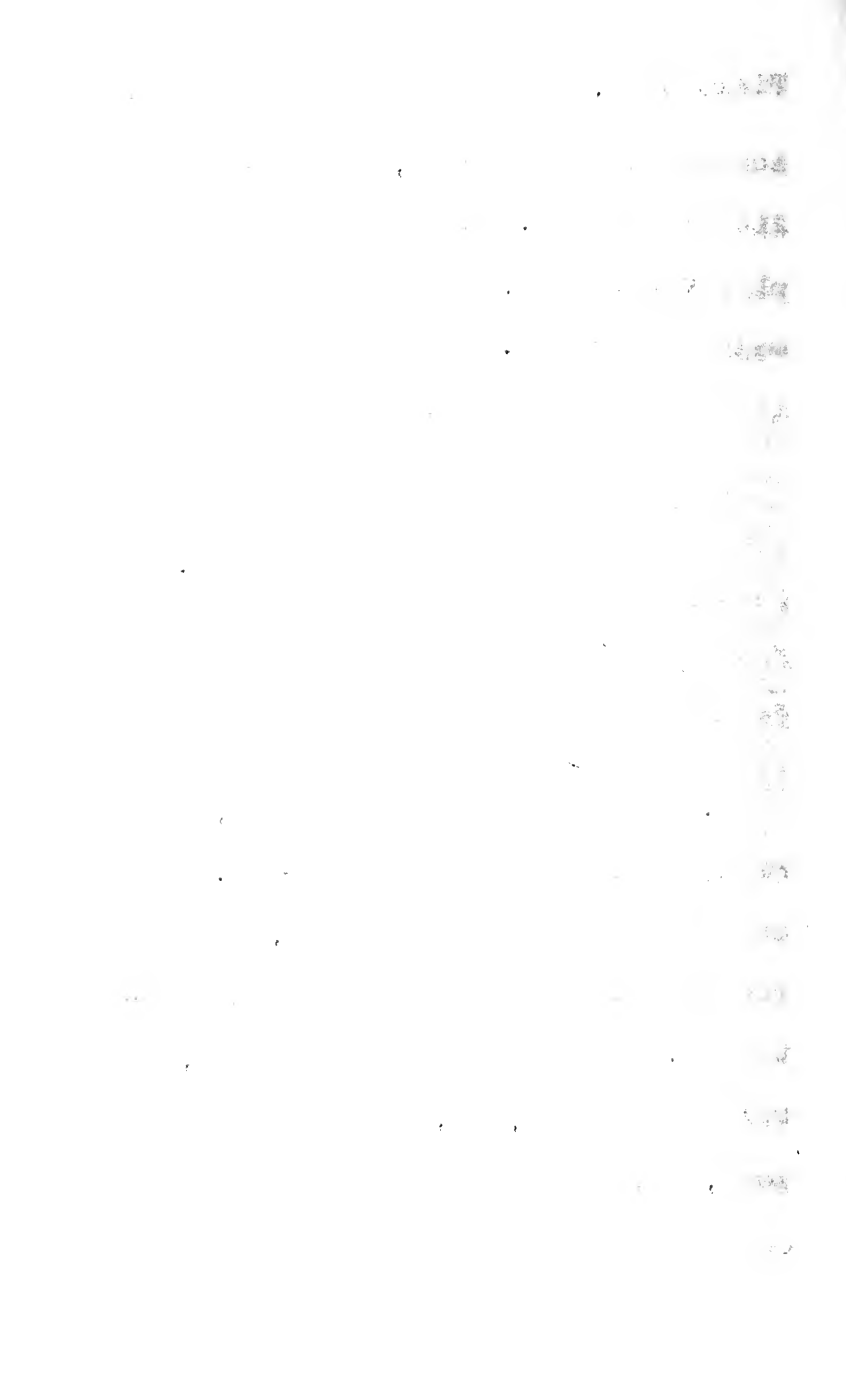
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local clergy expected, perhaps even feared changes. Changes may be a part of a visitation, but they are not the main part of it.

Go back for a moment to the time of Our Lord and listen to the young man asking Him what he must do to be perfect. He had enumerated many worthy things that he had done and now he expected that one more regulation would make him perfect. Once he had fulfilled it, he would be free to do as he liked. Instead of one more regulation, Our Lord proposed to him renunciation and imitation. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in



heaven; and come follow Me." (Matt. 19, 21) In another counsel Our Lord explained what was required of those who would follow Him. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

(Matt. 16, 24) This is the primary purpose of a visitation: to aid confreres renounce self-will that they may follow Our Lord in the Basilian way of life.

At the time of our profession, we do not vow to keep the Constitutions and the General Rule. We promise and vow to the Most Holy Trinity that we will keep obedience, chastity and poverty according to the Constitutions of the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil.

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We do not fulfill our obligation by keeping merely the substance of the vows; we have promised to lead a life according to our Constitutions. The first obligation of the Superior General is to live by the Constitutions and the General Rule; and the second is to provide for their observance by all members of the Congregation. That, too, is the first purpose of a visitation.

(Conference at Aquinas Institute,
April 17, 1958)

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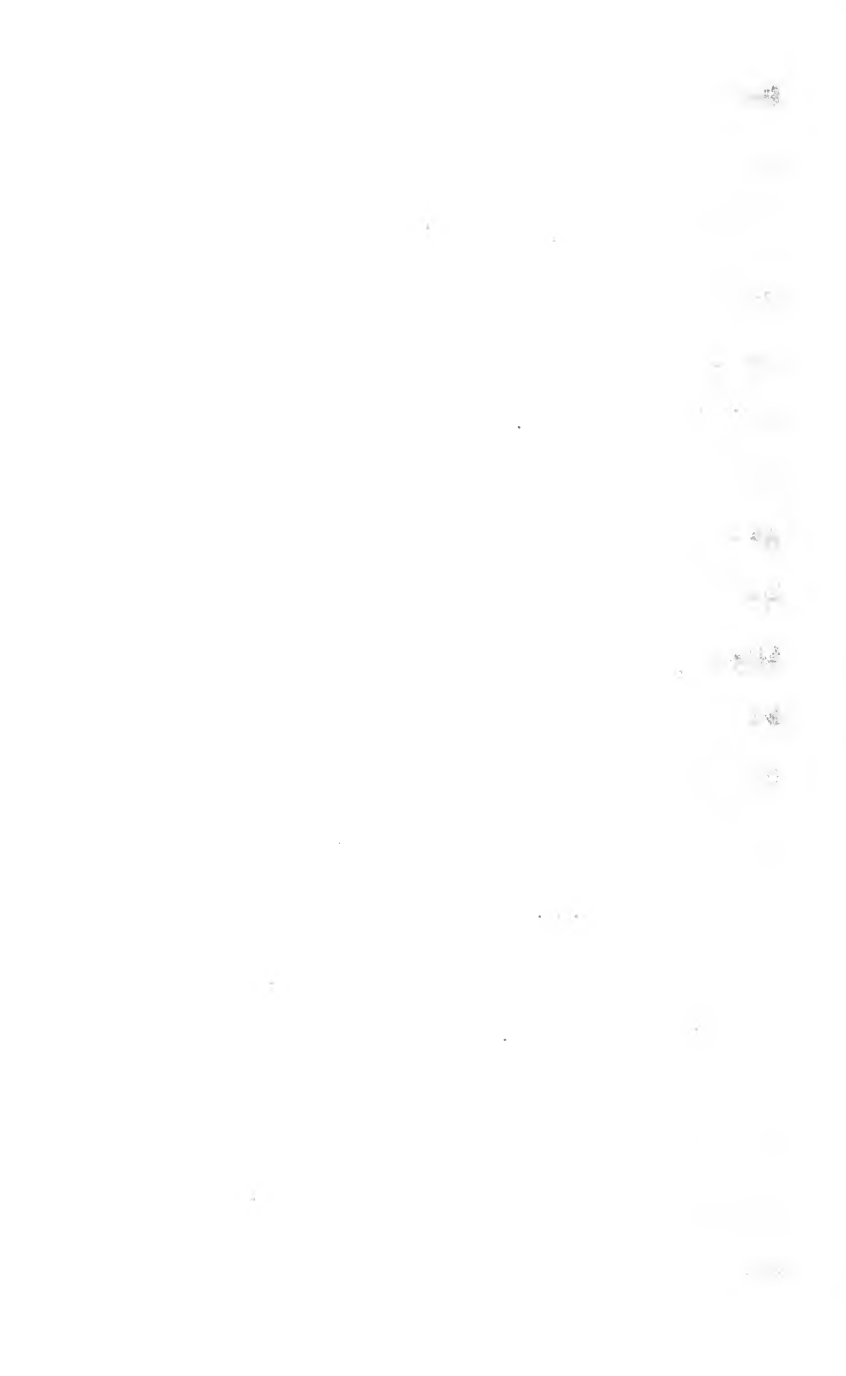
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From time to time a scholastic on his return to St. Basil's Seminary after one or more years of teaching has told me that those years were rough on his spiritual life. Does this mean that time out from the course of studies should be abolished? What is the mind of the Church on this? In the Statutes which accompany Sedes Sapientiae there is the following:

Interruption of the ordinary clerical studies for the purpose of trying out in a practical manner both the common and the specific vocation...can be retained where it exists and can even be laudably introduced elsewhere, provided the following conditions are observed.

The interruption must not be established for the immediate advantage of the societies engaged in ministerial works, since it is only an instrument and a help for the molding of



the students, directly disposed for their good from a number of viewpoints, namely the proving of their vocation, their education and their formation.

Without grave reason, an interruption must not exceed three years.

Notice that the first reason given by the Holy See for permitting and even encouraging an interruption in the course of studies is the proving of the student's vocation. Apprenticeship as a means of proving a vocation is traditional in our Congregation. It was still practiced at St. Michael's when I went there in first year high school. Besides the Basilian teachers we had teachers who wore a cassock and who were not Basilians. To of them became secular priests, three others went on

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in education as laymen, one became a Basilian. This was not a fair year to judge the system because the change in the vow of poverty was already being talked about. Since eleven priests withdrew at this time, it is only reasonable to suppose that it had an effect on vocations.

In the 1920's emphasis was given to advising candidates to enter the Novitiate from High School and this was followed by a partial system of apprenticeship while studying Theology. It was felt that this was not enough, quite apart from any harm it may have done to the course in Theology. The traditional apprenticeship was restored with this difference, that the young teacher was now in vows. Is this a sound system?

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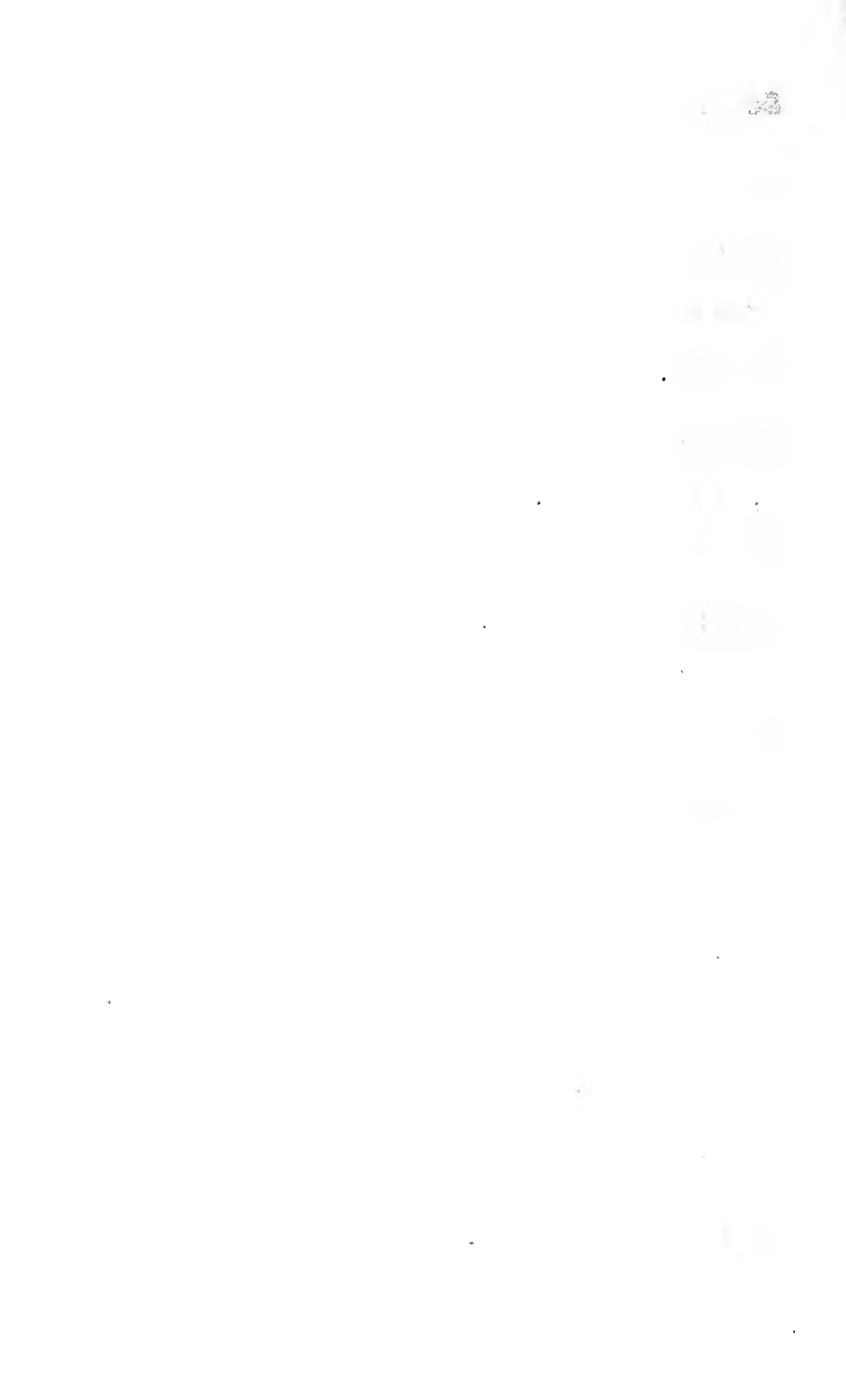
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The Oblate Fathers held in 1948 a Congress on Oblate Formation for their Provinces in the United States and Canada. They were founded about the same time as ourselves and now number 7,236 members. Besides specialists from within their ranks they had a few outside speakers. One of these was Dr. Rudolf Allers, Professor of Psychology at the Catholic University of America, Washington. In his talk he noted that:

Many seminarians attend the schools of the Order which they later join; they pass without any notable change from secondary schools to the Novitiate, College or Seminary. They become in a series of imperceptible transitions, students of Theology, members of the Order, and finally priests.

It is not for me to question the usefulness of this curriculum, (he continued). It probably had



its good sides and works satisfactorily in a great number of cases. But looked at from the point of view of psychology, it has its drawbacks... The seminarian has to choose... It happens easily then that he chooses what he knows and rejects what is unknown. Such a decision cannot be called a fully responsible one. Habit, the natural tendency to abide with the known, the uncertainty concerning the unknown — all these are powerful factors. He feels that he is prepared for no other kind of life ... He may believe sincerely that his decision is prompted by a true inclination for the religious life... But the more advanced he is on his way, the more difficult it becomes for him to turn back. He is less and less able to face the issue.

The Oblates did not like this section of Dr. Allers' paper which seemed to be a criticism of the system in the Oblate Congregation whereby a candidate passes in unbroken line from

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Juniorate to Novitiate to Scholasticate to the Priesthood. When members of a committee talked the matter over with him, he still held to his opinion. Look back on your own knowledge of the Congregation. How often has not the period of teaching been a point of decision for a confrere who was uncertain of his vocation? For some the decision came on graduation when they now felt that they were prepared for some other kind of life. For others it has come during the time of teaching. Since the years of teaching are sound from a religious and psychological point of view, why are they rough on the spiritual life?

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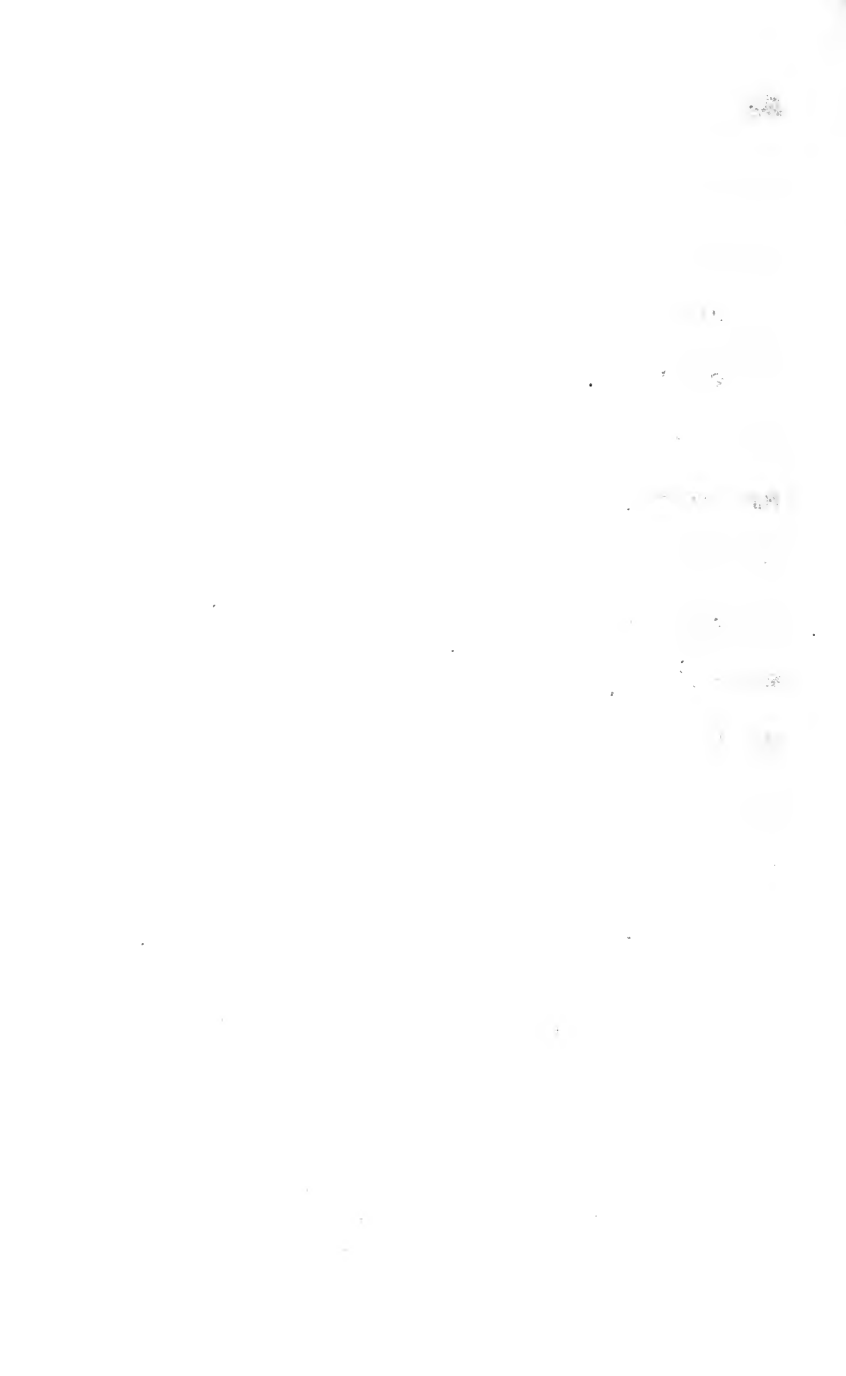
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A clue to the answer may be found in an article written by Father Stanley Lynch in the first issue of the Basilian March 1935. Speaking of those who claim that competitive sports build character, he wrote:

Athletics, they claim, develop a spirit of honesty, fair play, self-control, obedience, and so on. On the contrary, athletics do not, and cannot, make character. For the purpose of convenience let us define character as the sum total of all the virtues that a person possesses. The more virtue that he has, the stronger is his character; the less virtue one has, the weaker is his character. Being creatures of habit, we strengthen our habits of virtue by performing individual acts of virtue. For example, we strengthen our virtue of honesty by being honest at those particular times when we are called upon to be honest. Now a game does not make us honest, or fair, or just, or obedient, or self-controlled, or humble, etc. In



playing a game an athlete expresses his character... An athlete in a game, is just the same as he is outside a game. In a game, just as in any other thing we may do, we give expression to the character that is in us.

Apply this to your own life. An appointment to the staff of Aquinas Institute leaves a scholastic exactly what he was before. However, it does give him an opportunity of practicing virtues that he has acquired. I have heard several scholastics say that in the Seminary it is impossible not to keep the Rule. This may be a slight exaggeration, but in the Seminary there is a greater degree of supervision and a disposition of the day that makes the keeping of the Rule easy. In an edu-

cational institution the scholastic has two interests, not contradictory, his Rule and his teaching. The years of teaching are an opportunity of practicing the virtues you began to acquire in the Novitiate and in the Seminary.

Now it sometimes happens that a boy who seemed mild-tempered in the classroom displays an unruly temper when playing in a game. The game has revealed a defect in his character and the coach has an opportunity of helping him to overcome that defect. In like manner you will receive advice from more experienced confreres which will help you to overcome defects that show up during your years here. In this way the years

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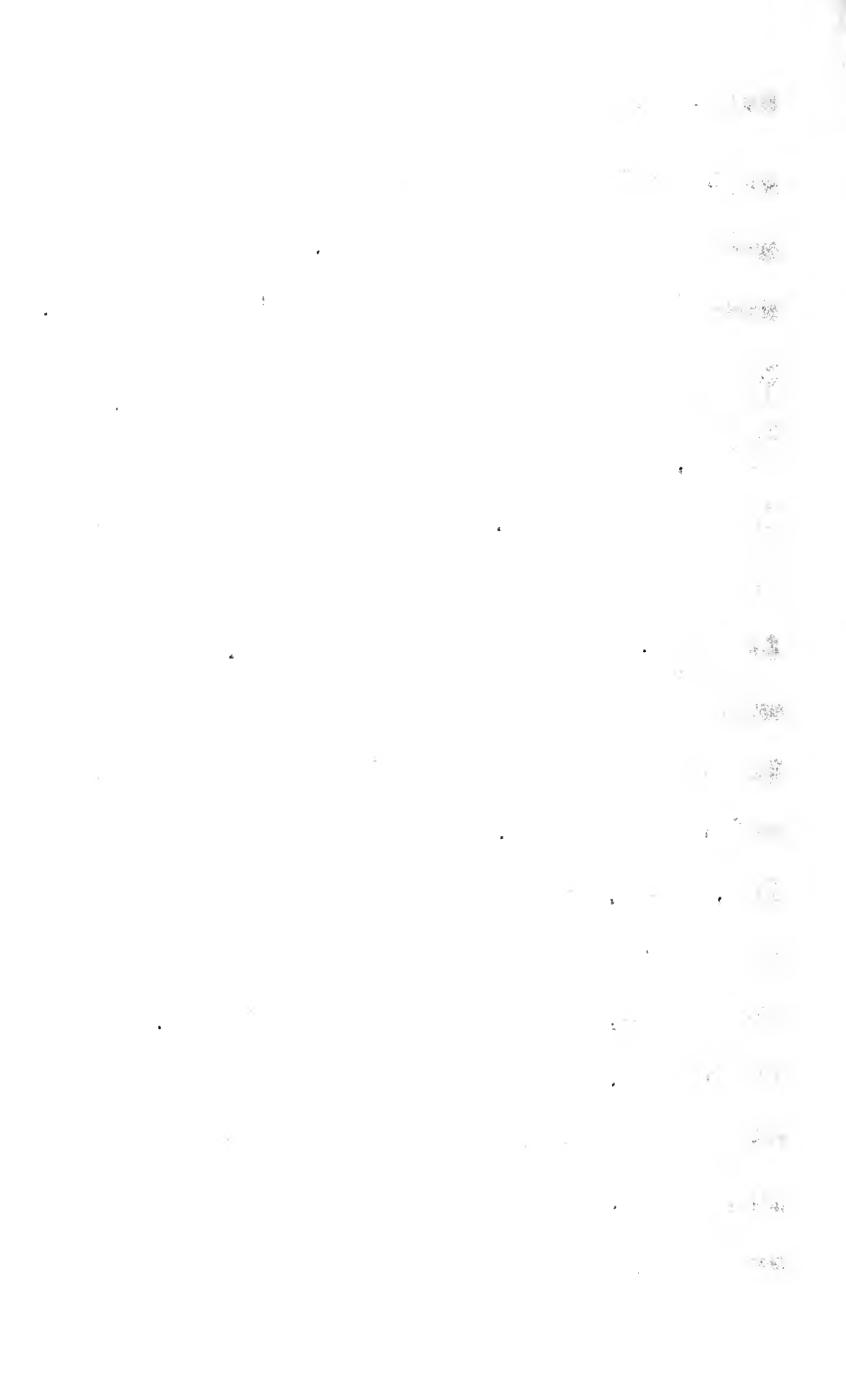
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of teaching conform to the second requirement of the Holy See, that they contribute to the scholastic's education.

In his article Father Lynch made another point, that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Something the same can be said of an uninterrupted course of studies. Most men are content, nay even anxious to lay aside the books after four years of university and get doing something. These years of teaching, then, contribute to your formation by fulfilling a wish that is in most young men, a yearning for activity. Therefore, putting aside vigorous academic studies can serve to recreate your mind, so that when you return to the study of Theology it will be not



only with added experience and a more mature outlook, but also with a freshness of approach that will enable you to profit by the course in Theology.

For this reason these years are as much a part of your formation as the summer vacation during the course in Theology.

In spiritual conferences, you have heard much about the need of self-knowledge.

In your classes in education you have heard about self-evaluation. That is what these years of your first taste of the Basilian apostolate are — years in which you learn about yourself, years in which you learn to evaluate your spiritual life. They really are no more rough on it than a summer schedule or a holiday schedule at the Seminary.

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Just recall how frequently such days found you with most of your spiritual exercises still unfulfilled late in the evening. They showed how much you depended on routine, perhaps one might say on someone else carrying the cross for you. These years at Aquinas do not destroy spiritual life, they show to what extent you are a creature of habit, to what extent a man of spiritual conviction.

(Conference to scholastics at Aquinas Institute, Rochester, April 18, 1958)

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THE RECRUITING OF NEW MEMBERS

The General Rule of the Basilian Fathers devotes a chapter to "The Future of the Institute." The first section of this chapter has the title, "Recruiting New Members". It begins:

319. All members are urged to pray daily that God may send suitable subjects to continue and to extent the work of the Institute and they are urged also to be always on the alert to secure promising recruits for the Congregation.

The Constitutions, which go back in printed form to 1878, do not mention the recruiting of vocations, not even in the definitive revision approved by the Holy See on October 14, 1938. The English translation published by Father Pierre Grand in July 1908 had this reference to vocations:

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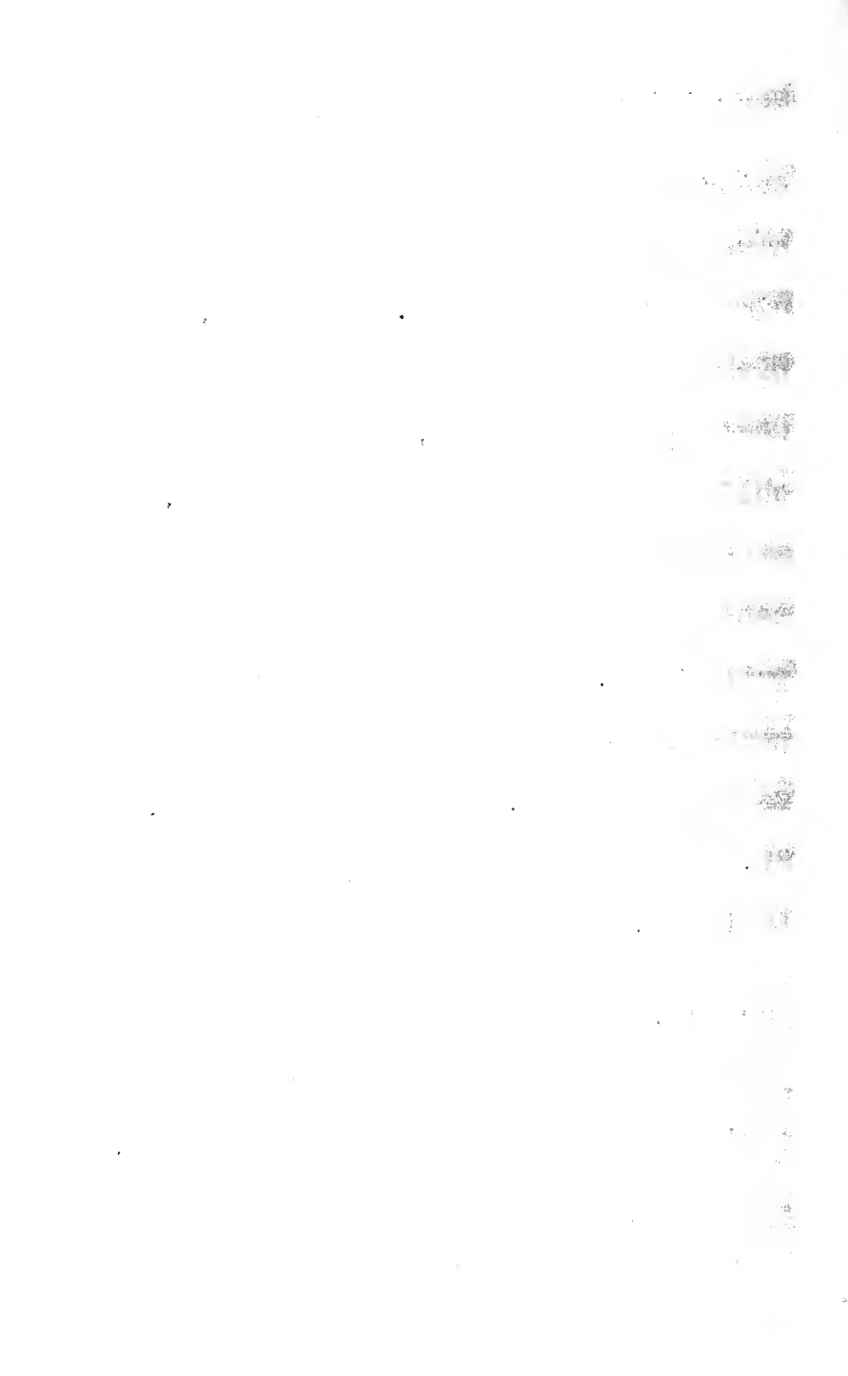
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5. When he receives an application, it is the duty of the Master of Novices to seek for information on the piety, character, intelligence and former life of the postulant.

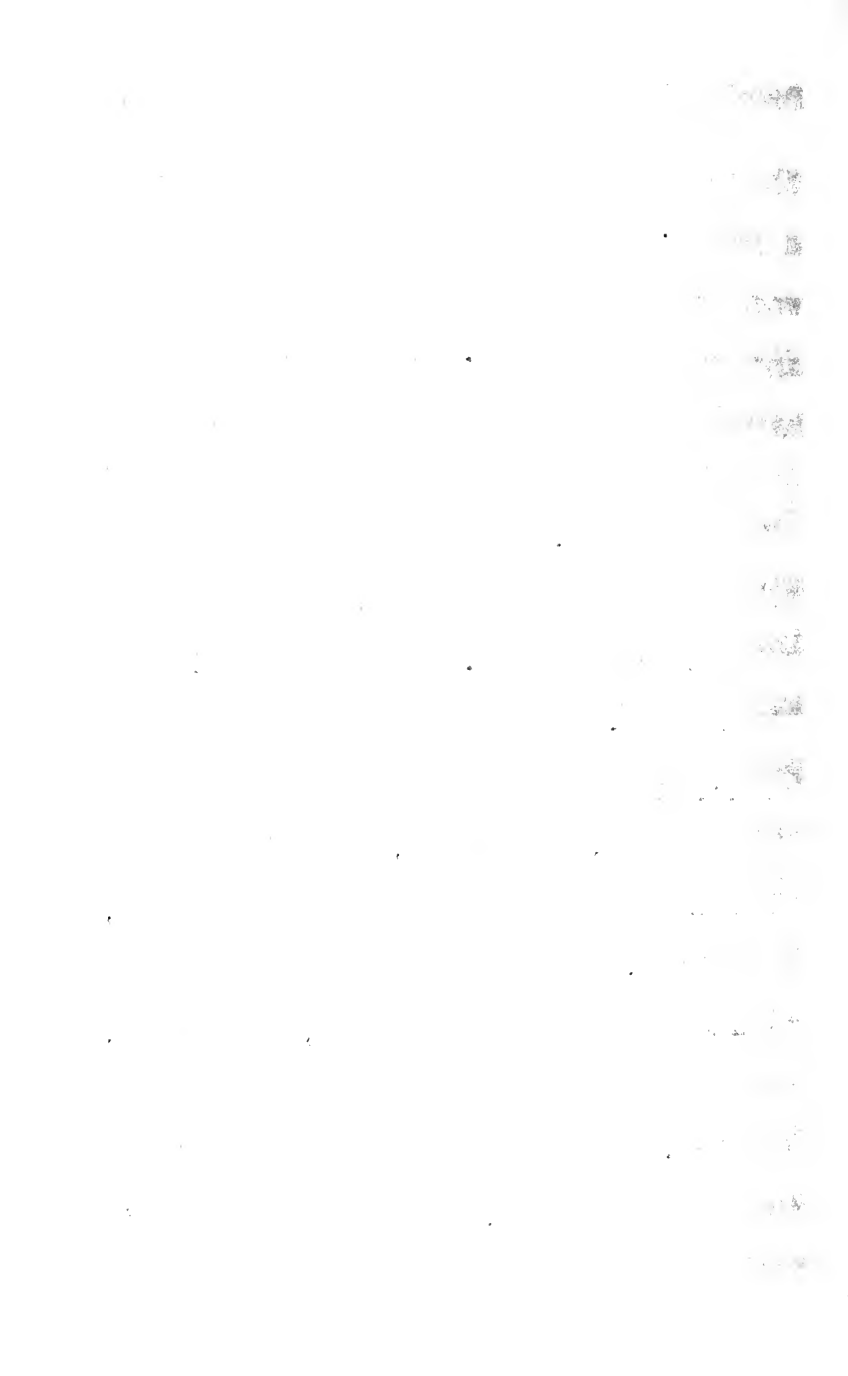
About the time this translation was published in Toronto, Canon Joseph Lahitton in France was writing a book on the priestly vocation. Up till this time spiritual writers and theologians, in France and in other countries, had emphasized the subjective element in a priestly and religious vocation. A young man felt that he was being called to the priesthood, and it was his duty to present himself to a Bishop for the fulfillment of his vocation. On the part of the Bishop there was a duty to receive the candidate and in due course to ordain him. Canon Lahitton made it

quite clear that the young man did not have a vocation until a Bishop called him to the priesthood. Moreover, if a Bishop had enough priests to meet the needs of his diocese, he was under no obligation to ordain the young man, no matter how suitable he appeared and no matter how deeply he felt called to the priesthood. The book raised a storm of protest and in due time was denounced to the Holy See. After examination, St. Pius X approved the view of Canon Lahitton.

Once St. Pius X made it clear that a young man did not have a vocation until a Bishop called him to the priesthood, the emphasis in vocation literature began to change from the obligation of the young man to fulfill his vocation,



to the duty of Bishops to seek out vocations. This shift in emphasis had produced a tremendous literature on recruiting vocations. The Seminary Library receives the Proceedings of the Vocation Institute held annually at the University of Notre Dame. It has books on the subject by Fathers Poage, Kane and by many other writers. It is a growing literature. The first volume of the Catholic Periodical Index covered three years, 1930-1933, and listed 40 entries under the heading: Vocation, Religious. The first part of the tenth volume covers one full year, 1956-1957, and under the same heading has 62 entries. This literature may be divided into three groups, one part dealing with



the arousing of interest in vocations; a second part telling how to foster a vocation in those who are interested; and the third part dealing with the harvesting of vocations.

This lecture will be restricted to the gathering of vocations. It is not intended to duplicate the work of the annual Vocation Meeting, nor is its purpose to summarize the writings of the Director of Vocations. Its purpose is to treat the subject in a scientific manner. Some writers begin with a point and then marshall arguments and present the facts that will support it. The scientific approach on the other hand looks for facts, all the facts, weighs them and then tries to find a

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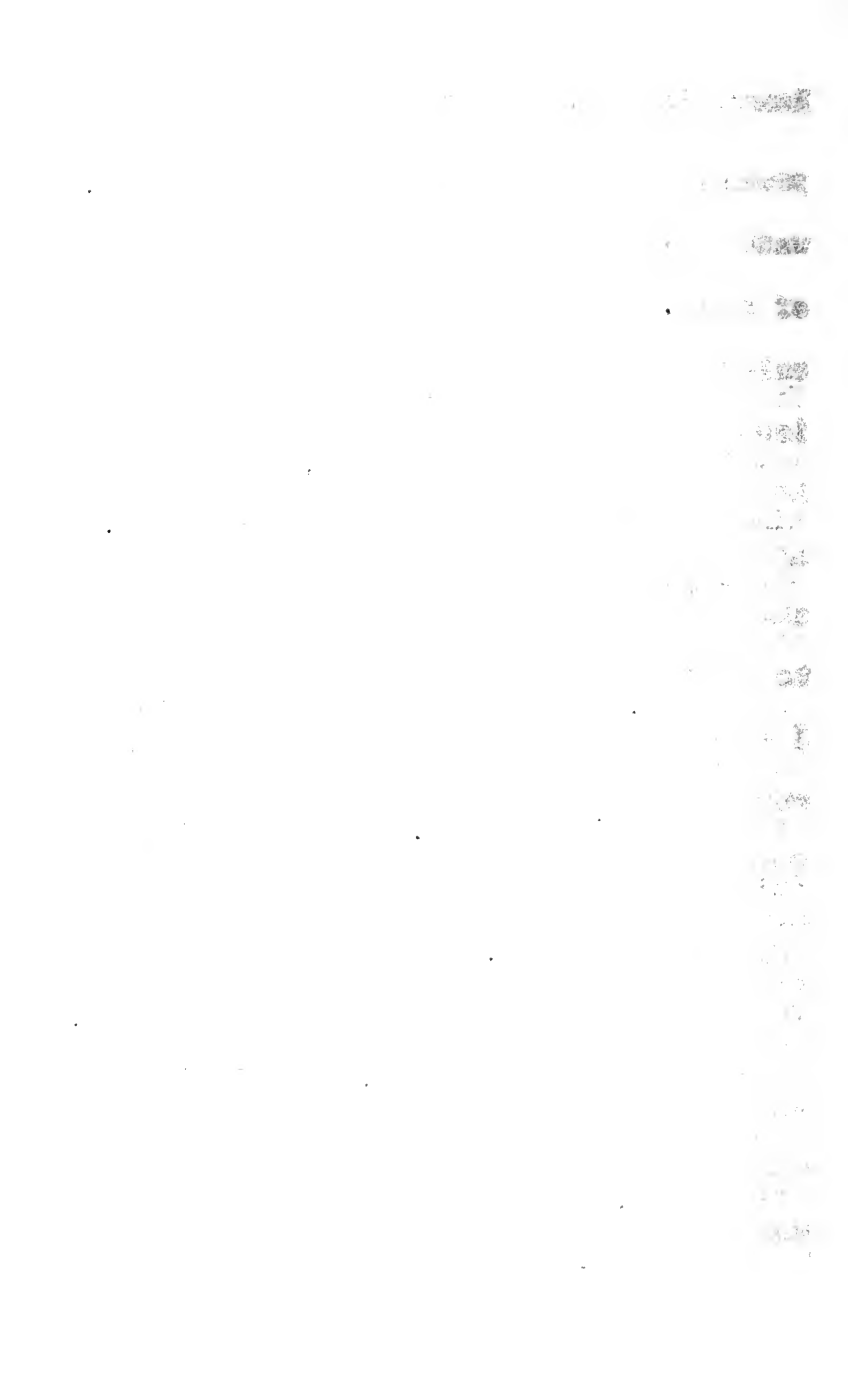
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theory that will account for all of them. Let me illustrate what I mean by an example.

It is an observed fact that when you put ice into a jug of water, after a time the ice melts and the water cools. The explanation of this fact is that the melting of the ice took heat from the water. Some then go on to inquire how much heat is required to melt a given quantity of ice. The determination of this does not seem to present any great problem. Simply measure the volume of water and take its temperature. Weight a quantity of ice, drop it into the water and as soon as the ice has all melted, again take the temperature of the water. It now becomes a simple



problem in arithmetic, e.g. 100 c.c. of water dropped 4° while melting 5 grams of ice. The answer is that it took 80 calories of heat to melt one gram of ice. I once performed this experiment in the Physics Building and thought I had obtained excellent results until the Demonstrator came along and began to ask questions. What assurance had I that the 5 grams of ice was at 0° and was all ice? The presence of only one quarter gram of water would be a five percent error that would give not 80 but 84 calories. What assurance had I that heat from the air did not affect the results? And so on. I propose to examine our gathering of vocations during the past four years to see if

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there are any factors that we have not taken into consideration. I have chosen the years 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1958 for examination because these are the years that the present General Council has had to act upon applications for the Novitiate. Most of the candidates for the year 1954 had been accepted previous to the General Chapter of that year.

Let us begin with the 1958 applications. They constitute a group of young men who know us only from the outside and who like what they have seen of our way of life enough to want to make it their way of life. Up till now 43 applications have come before the General Council, a number that will probably rise to 50

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before the end of August. One was not a formal application. It came from a young colored man, aged 24, who had been with another Community and who had left because of poor health and who had also failed in three out of seven subjects at their Christmas examinations. His evident lack of ability and his questionable health were taken as signs of no vocation to the Basilian life. Two formal applications were refused because of low scholastic standing. Of the 40 accepted, three received this warning, "The General Council expressed concern over your marks and will expect to hear from the Master of Novices that you are applying yourself diligently to the studies of the Novitiate."

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When the Council is acting upon applications for the Novitiate, one member or the other will repeatedly comment, "We do not seem to be getting the top students." A few years ago the Rector of the Jesuit Seminary, then Father McGuigan, expressed a similar opinion. He felt that religious communities were getting ordinary vocations, but very few of the exception ones. At the recent priests retreat at Assumption University, I asked the Dominican who preached it about this, and he felt that the same was true of their vocations. At least we are not alone in this deficiency.

The applicants of 1957 who are still with us now know us as beginners in our

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way of life. Last year the Council had before it 57 formal applications for admission. Only one candidate was refused, and the reason was a poor scholastic record. Out of the 56 who were accepted, four did not show up at the Novitiate. One candidate deferred his entrance until this year for family reasons. In two cases pressure was applied to steer the candidates away from the Novitiate and towards a Diocese. In the fourth case it would seem that the pressure was on our side and the candidate is reported to have made application merely to please a zealous Basilian. In these four cases there is one common factor, no Basilian was acquainted with the home life of the candidate.

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A group of three came to the Novitiate but did not receive the religious habit. One stayed overnight, the others made the retreat. The two who made the retreat had doubts about their vocation when they made application. In all three cases it can be said that no Basilian was acquainted with the home life of the candidate. Adding these two groups together, it can be said that one out of every eight applicants accepted did not receive the religious habit.

What happened to the 49 who did receive the habit. Eight of these cannot be said to have given the Basilian life a fair trial. They left within a couple of months of their reception. In five

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cases Basilians did not know their home life. In three cases there was doubt about their vocation and the candidate was encouraged to go and try it out. Pressure is less discernible in these cases, though in one it seems that the family wanted the boy to be a priest. By the middle of October the two Novitiates had a total of 41 novices. One out of every four candidates who were recommended were not strong enough applicants to give our life a fair trial. Four more have left since and in all instances we had no adequate knowledge of their home life.

Another comment frequently made in Council is this: "Is there any way we

can get priests to visit the home and meet the family before recommending a boy for the Novitiate? A typical application form reads like this:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Have you met the father? | No. |
| Have you met the mother? | No. |
| Have you met the family? | No. |
| Reputation of the family? | Excellent. |
| Do parents support him in his desire to be a priest? | Yes. |

It is beyond me how a Basilian priest can answer questions in so important a matter without first hand evidence. No court of law would accept the hearsay evidence that Basilian priests offer as a recommendation.

Let us go back now to 1956, a group of applications that numbered 54. Those who have survived now know us from inside. During the Spring and Summer of

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1956 the General Council refused three applicants for lack of academic ability and two more were put off for a year. Out of the 51 who were accepted, five withdrew their applications. One did not come, nor did he write to say that he was not coming. The other four had doubts from the beginning. In one of these cases some pressure was exerted to divert the candidate to a Diocese, and the Basilian priest who had been dealing with him felt that he probably made a wise decision. During the rest of the year six novices left the Novitiate before Christmas, one after only three days as a novice. Six left after Christmas. In the first group the only pattern that I can pick out is lack of

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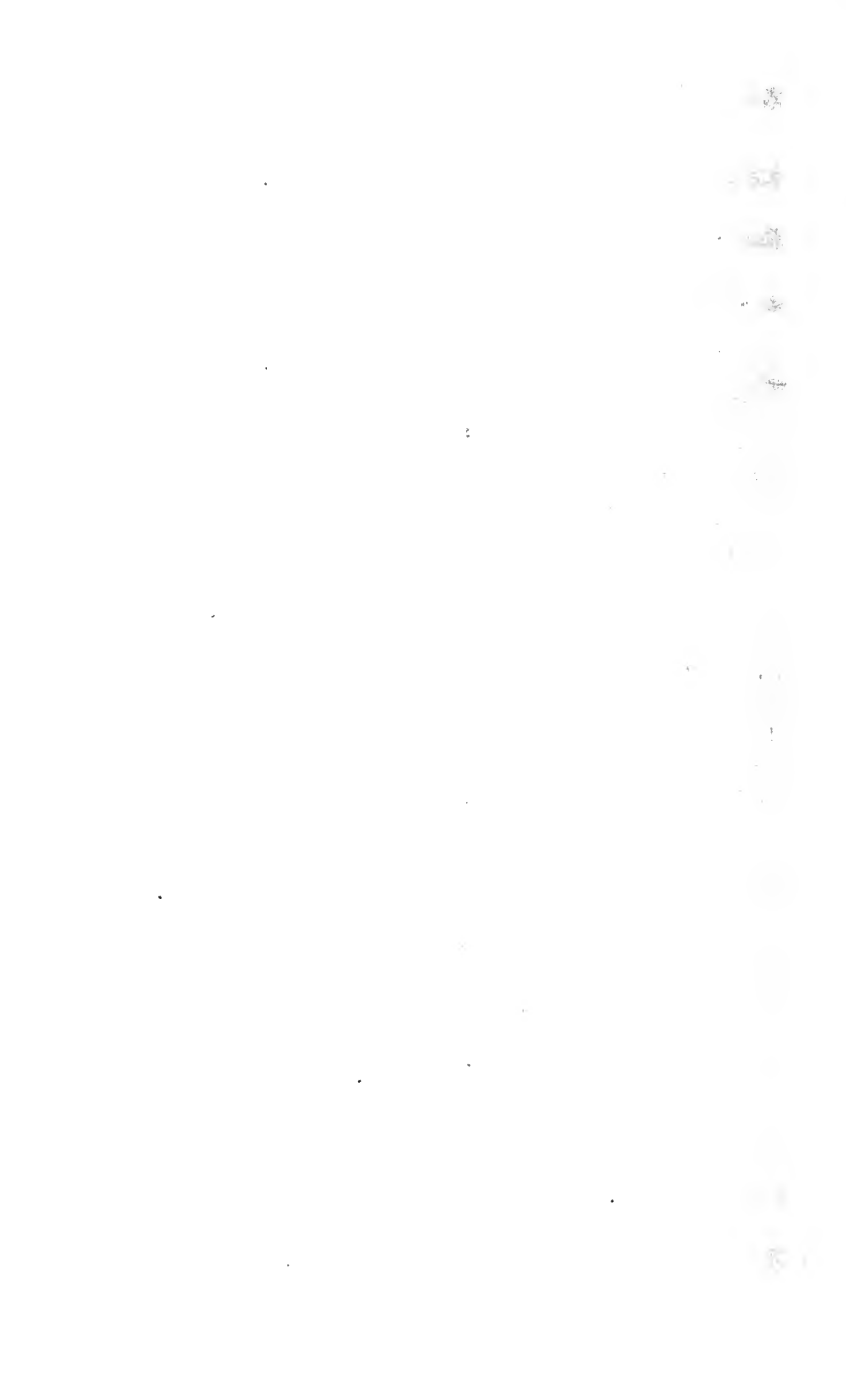
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knowledge of their home life. There does not seem to be any pattern in the leaving of the six who went after giving the life a fair trial. Finally 34 were professed, and here is the significant point — all 34 were recommended for renewal of vows and all 34 are anxious to renew their vows. It is only fair to add that in a couple of cases the recommendation for renewal lacked enthusiasm.

The year 1955 was a year of firsts. It was the first year that the present General Council accepted all the candidates for the Novitiate. It was the first year that the new application forms were used. It was the first year that a Vocation Meeting was held. And it was



the first year in office of the present Masters of Novices. It cannot be called a successful year.

This year of first brought the highest number of applications received by the present Council, 58. Seven of these were refused, two on medical grounds, three for lack of ability. Out of the 51 applications accepted, 15 failed to receive the religious habit. Four simply did not come to the Novitiate, three came but did not even last out the retreat, one withdrew under pressure from home, another under pressure to join a Diocese while a third may have been under pressure from his family to be a priest which pressure he removed by enlisting in the Army. The 1955

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application form did not ask if the priest recommending the candidate had met the candidate's family.

The novitiate year was remarkable in that only two novices left before Christmas, the remaining 13 who left can be said to have given the life a fair trial. Four of those who left had been doubtful of their vocations from the beginning; two left for reasons of health; the Masters of Novices were surprised by two of the withdrawals and I think regarded the act as a mistake. Finally 21 were professed. Two scholastics who had been doubtful from the beginning but who decided to give not only the novitiate life but also the community life a fair trial have left since. One

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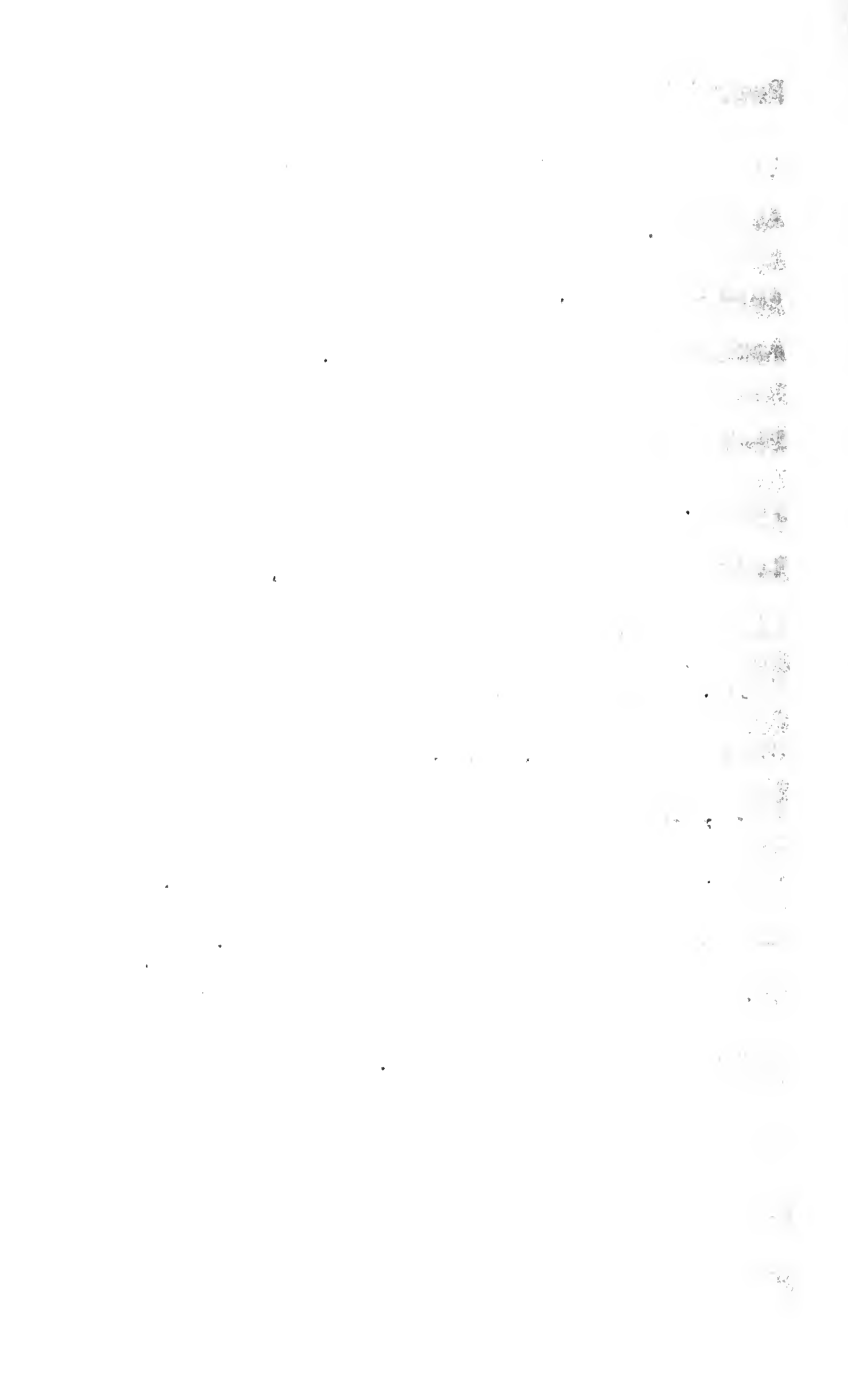
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is leaving this year after two years in vows. This means that out of 58 applications, the 1955 class has been reduced to 18 scholastics.

These are the facts of the past four years. Before attempting to formulate theories and to offer advice, I would like to put them together in tabular form. In this table figures that are still variable, i.e. candidates for 1958, number of scholastics now in vows, novices now in the Novitiate, are the figures as of June 30th. In the table these figures are distinguished by an asterisk.

Table I

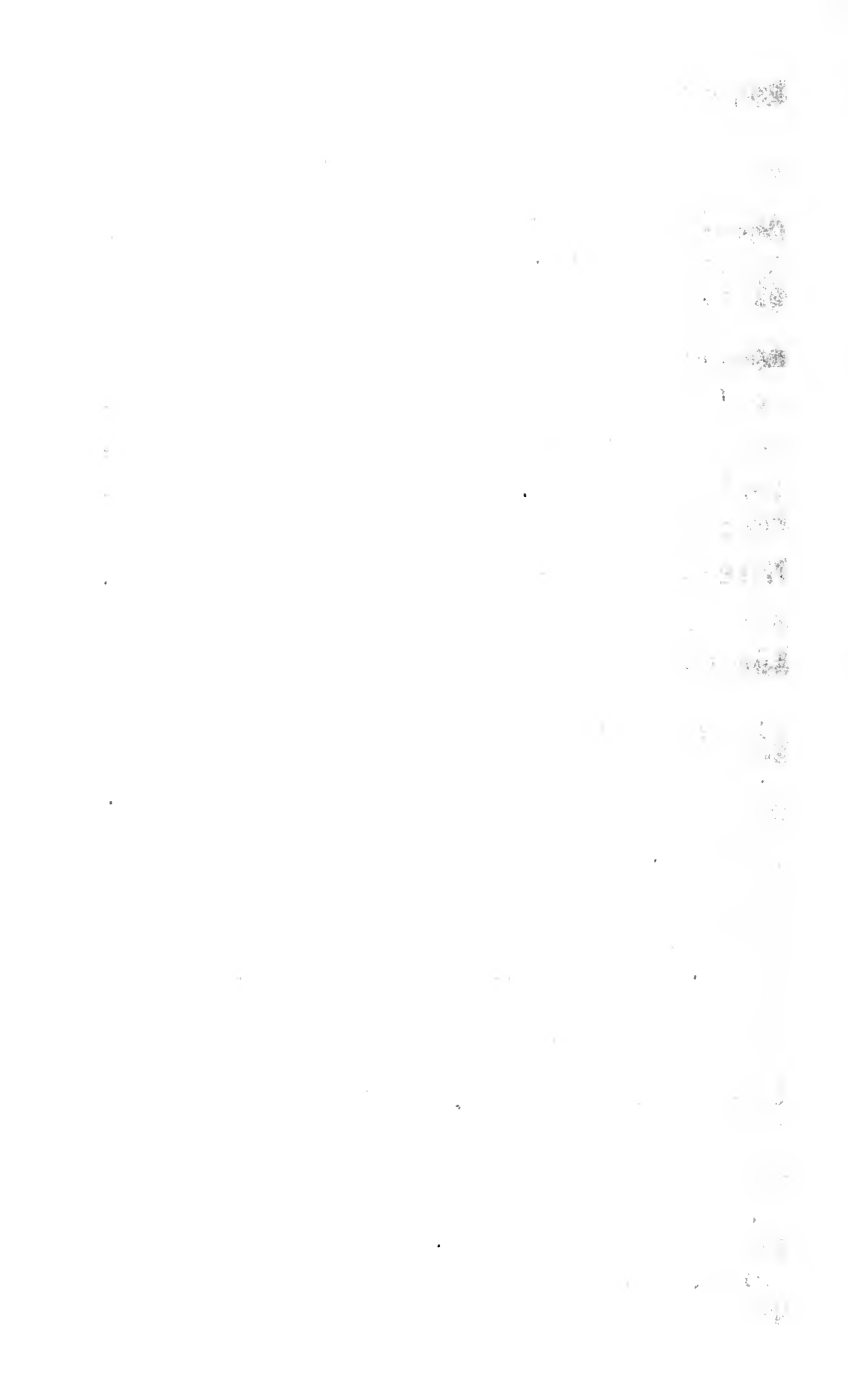


Recruiting New Members

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| | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Applications received | 58 | 54 | 57 | 43* |
| Applications refused | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3* |
| Applications accepted | 51 | 51 | 56 | 40* |
| Applications withdrawn | 15 | 5 | 7 | 0* |
| Rec'd Religious Habit | 36 | 46 | 49 | - |
| Left before Christmas | 2 | 6 | 9 | - |
| Left after Jan. 1st | 13 | 6 | 3 | - |
| Novices professed | 21 | 34 | 37* | - |
| Left as scholastics | 3* | 0* | - | - |

How do these figures compare with other Communities? At the moment I cannot give a direct answer to this question. However, the experience of other Communities of men in North America has been that recruiting activities are sound when the number of novices equals 10% of the priests. This figure makes allowance for withdrawals as scholastics and will assure an adequate supply of priests to replace deceased and ailing

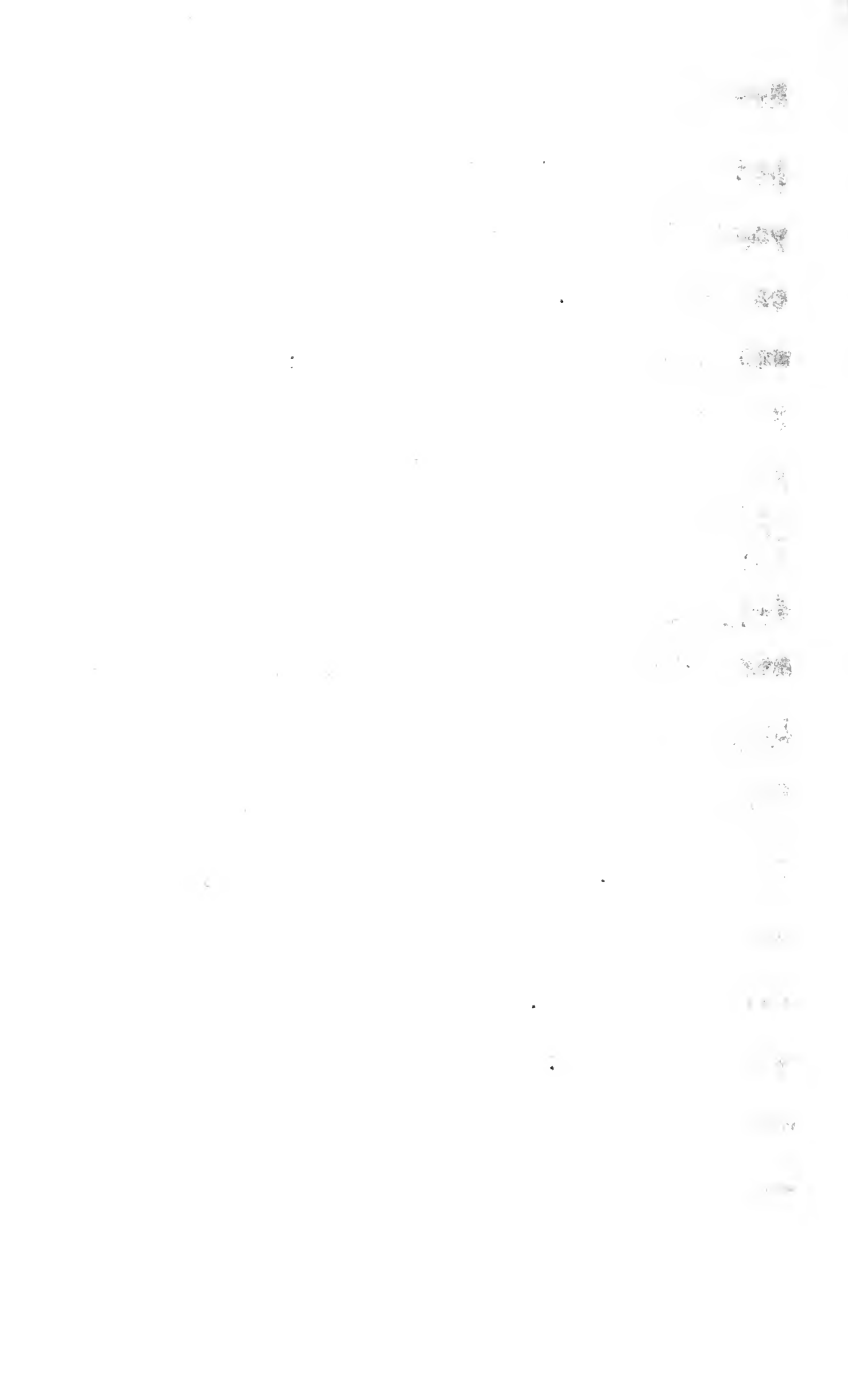


priests and will in addition enable the Community to undertake a modest program of expansion. Table II shows how we measure up to this standard:

Table II

| Priests | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Priests | 340 | 360 | 380 | 400 |
| Actually Professed | 21 | 34 | 37* | - |
| 10% would be | (34) | (36) | (38) | (40) |

Such are the statistics on recruiting within our Congregation for the past four years. When Father Leslie Vasek was completing the experimental work for his thesis, he had to ask himself two questions: "What do these figures mean?" and "Are these results valid?" The proper use of our vocation statistics requires that we ask the same questions.



Let us begin our examination with the year 1955. Out of 58 applications received less than one third are still with us. The results are so bad that I feel justified in proposing to you that all the common errors associated with the gathering of vocations will be found in the class of 1955 and in a magnified form. I propose then to use it as a base and to indicate from a comparison with succeeding years whether our practice is improving, or not.

In the year 1955 two candidates were refused admission for health reasons and two novices left the Novitiate for the same reason. Succeeding years present a better picture and it can be

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said that priests are careful when it comes to considering the health of a prospective candidate. During the past three months the novices now in the Novitiates had a thorough medical check-up made by a physician chosen by the Master of Novices. The results confirm the statement that our priests are prudent in this matter.

In addition to normal health, candidates are expected to have the ability to make a university course. In 1955, four candidates were refused by reason of poor marks. This continues to be the leading reason why applications must be refused. I think that it is fair to state that the number of applications coming with minimum academic

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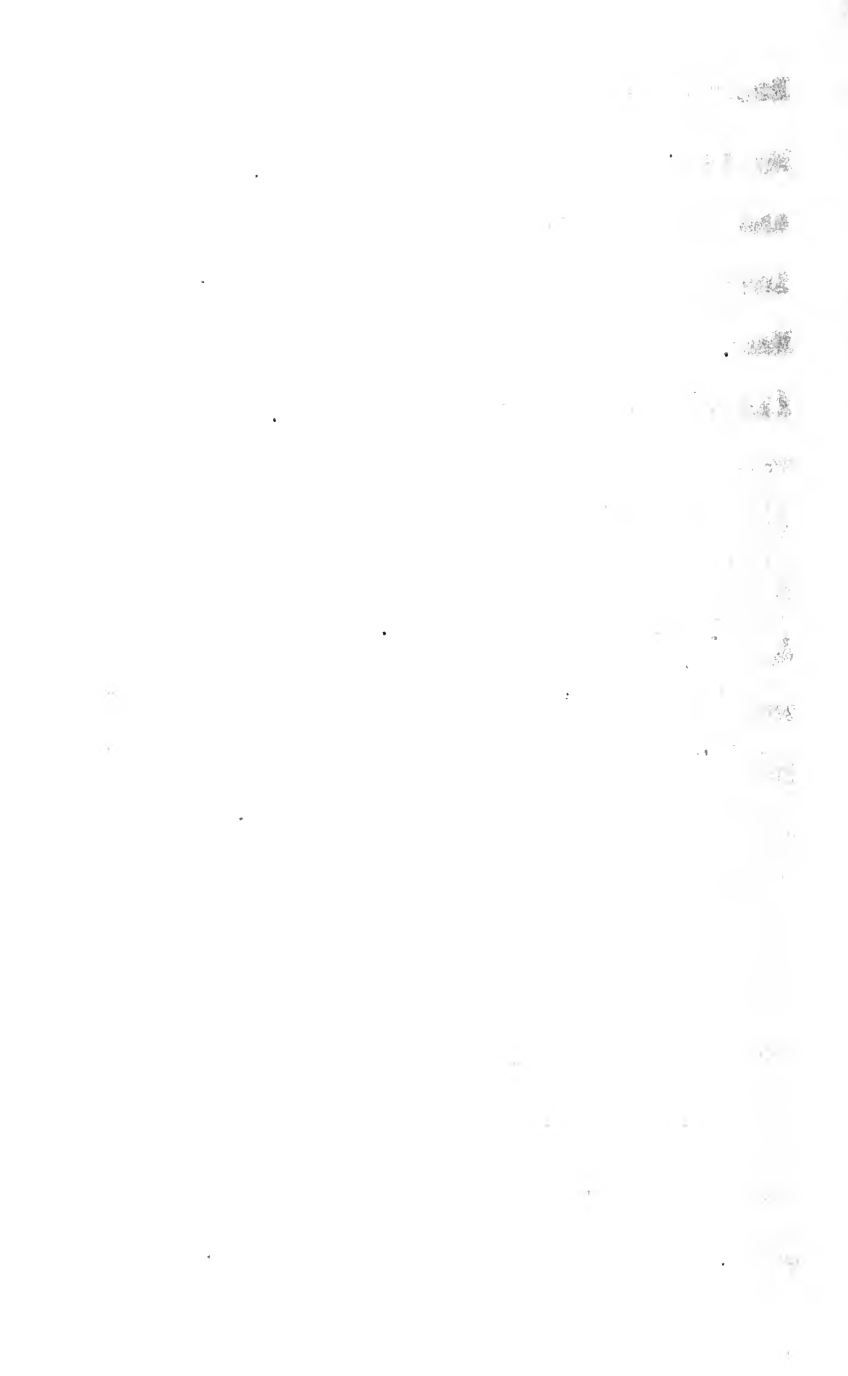
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qualifications continues high, while the number with excellent academic qualifications continues disappointingly low. I would like to propose two theories to account for this fact.

The first theory is that our priests share the typical North American sympathy for the underdog. In athletic competitions, the team that loses frequently receives more spectator support than the better team which won. I suggest that in the fostering of vocations we tend to do more for the less gifted student than we do for the more gifted one. Certainly that is true in the academic policy of most of our schools, and I think it carries over into the field of vocations.



My second theory is more far-reaching and less susceptible of proof. Let me introduce it by recounting Bishop Marrocco's experience at a recent confirmation in St. Basil's Church. He wanted to put in a plea for vocations for the Sisters. His example was that a girl who marries has a family of 3, 4, 5, or more children to look after, whereas the girl who becomes a Sister has in school a class of 40 or 50 to a mother to. At this point one girl put up her hand and asked, "Please, Your Excellency, could she not do that as a teacher?" My theory is that we present the human work of the priest-teacher and not his supernatural life. I might even go further and say that sometimes we become careless in our personal lives

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and put school activities ahead of our priestly and religious life. The better students will quickly see through this. When it comes to their own vocation they find that they can expect as much on the natural side in the world. The less gifted student does not see through and he does come to the Novitiate.

The class of 1955 exhibits in a marked manner two common faults made in the gathering of vocations. The first of these is the recommending of candidates who are still doubtful. Of course, the doubt here is on the part of the candidate. If he is not sure that he should be with us, I urge you to decide in favor of the Congregation by asking him to wait until he has made up his mind.

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If you advise him to go and try it out, here is what has happened. He comes to the Novitiate, receives the habit and then begins to take an undue proportion of the time of the Master and the Confessor discussing his personal problems. That time is stolen from the determined novices who are thereby deprived of a better formation. Then in the end the doubtful candidate leaves. And who is to tell how many he may take with him, or have follow him? I would say that the statistics I have presented indicate that not only in 1955, but in succeeding years, too many young men have been encouraged to come to the Novitiate while they were still doubtful about their vocation.

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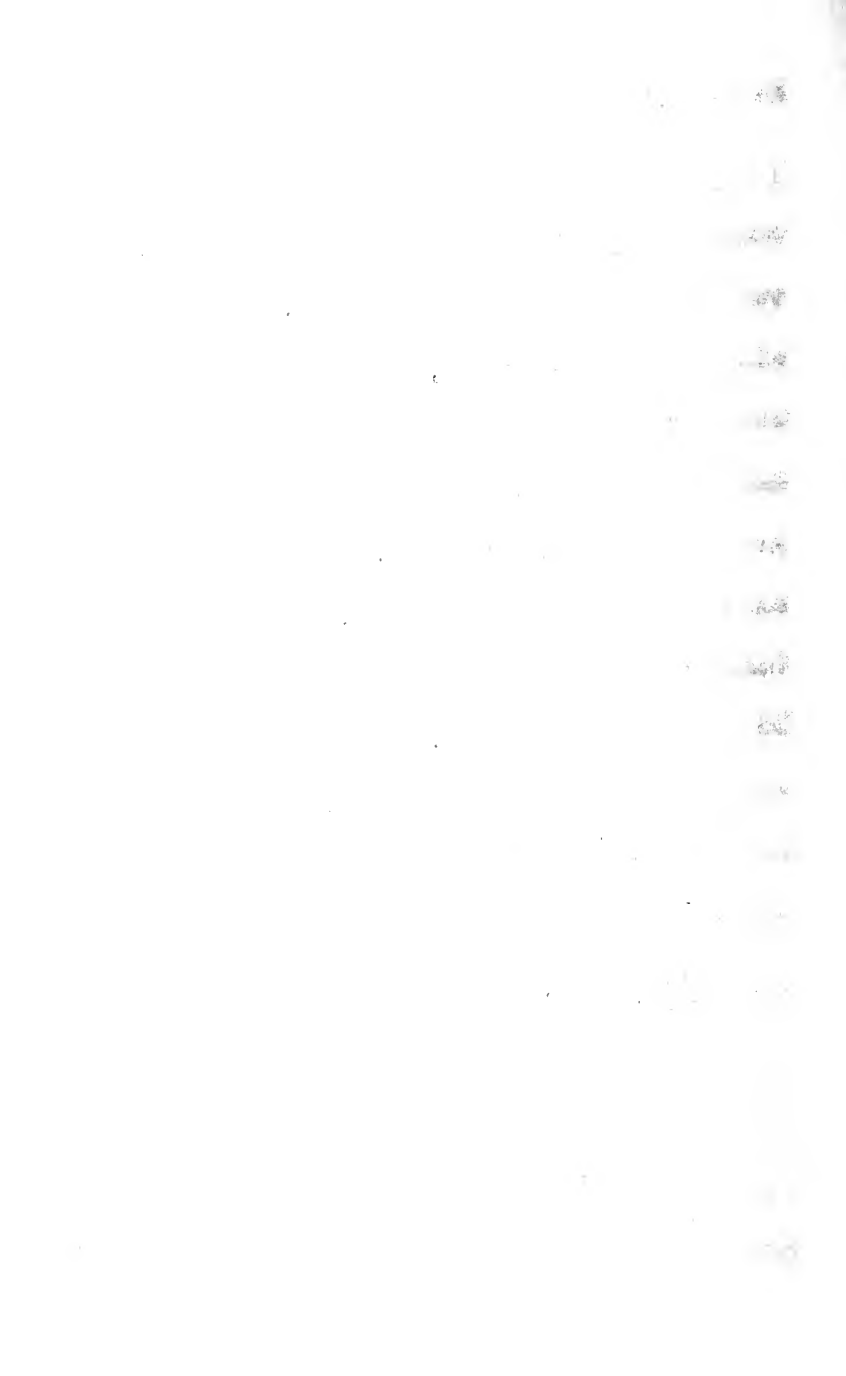
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Another cause for the great number of dropouts in 1955 was undue pressure. It was a year of enthusiasm. Under a new General Council, the Congregation was going to go places and no House wanted to be out of step in the matter of gathering vocations. Pressure may be applied in three ways. It may come from an outside party to diver the candidate to a Diocese. There is nothing that we can do about this, or at least not much; and in the view of some if the candidate cannot stand up under such pressure, he probably is too doubtful in his own mind to survive the Novitiate. Pressure can also be applied on our part. No House and no individual Basilian is under a quota for vocations.



I admit that a House that sends good vocations does sometimes get preferential treatment, e.g. a staff member will be left because of his vocation work while another House will lose an experienced teacher. Fortunately the use of pressure is declining. At the same time I would draw attention to the fact that only undue pressure is wrong. Do not simply sit back and wait for boys to make up their own mind without your guidance, a guidance that will help them find the vocation channel.

The last form of pressure is that exerted by parents who want to see the boy be a priest. I would say that one or two cases of this come each year. Although not of itself a serious problem, it

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does introduce what I think is the main fault in our gathering of vocations: namely Basilians do not know the home life of the candidate. There has been absolutely no improvement here during the past four years. At one point, Father Daniel Forestell urged that priests visit the home; that they look and see if the mother was a good manager; if the home atmosphere was religious. Meeting parents at school event is not enough. On such occasions you prepare the school so it will look nice for the parents and they dress up so they will look nice for the teachers. Neither really gets to know the other. At a recent meeting of the Masters of Novices, the guest speaker, Father W.C. Bier, SJ,

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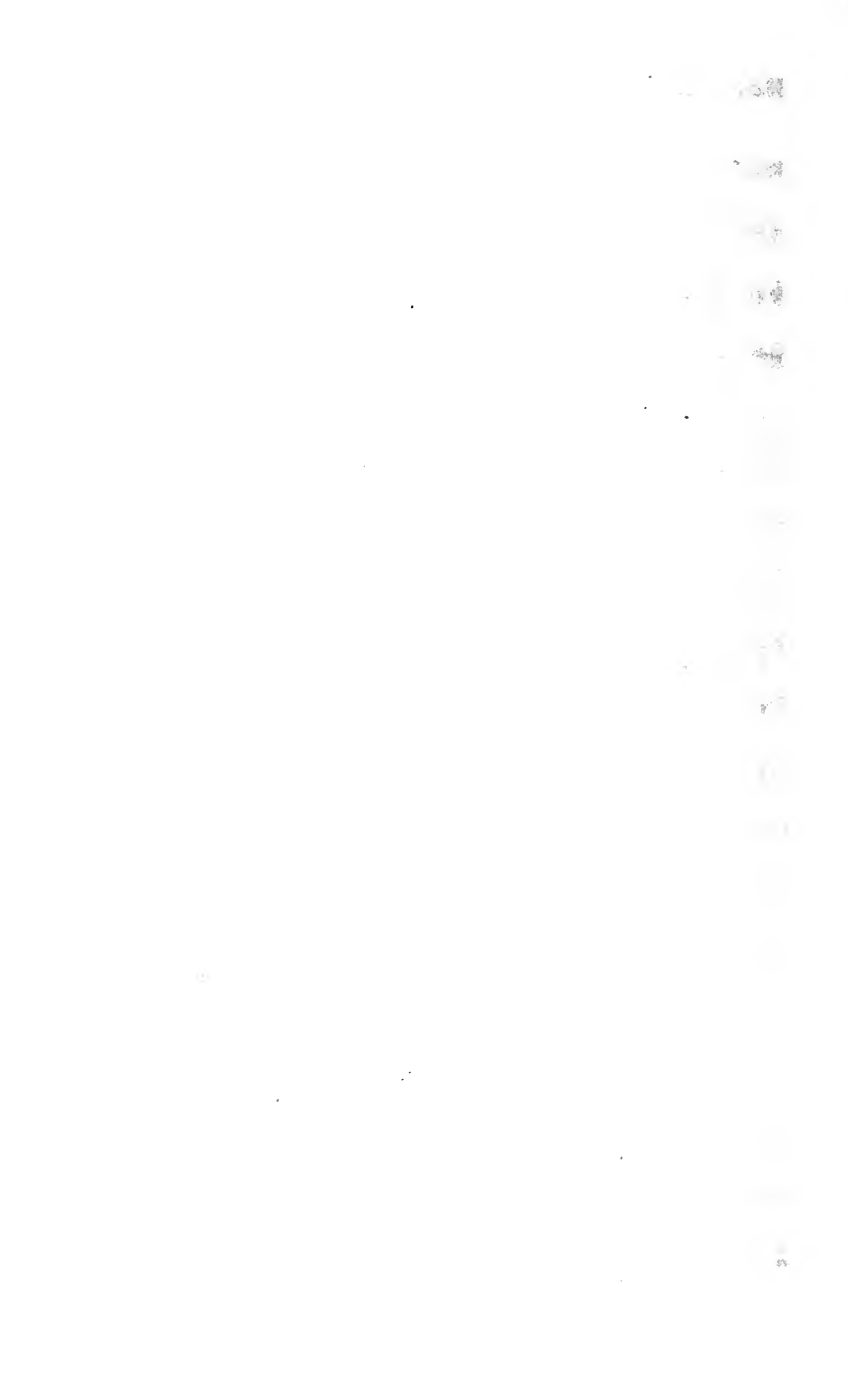
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advocated enlarging the maxim that good vocations come from good Catholic homes to include psychologically stable vocations come from psychologically stable homes. I am sure that one or more visits to the candidate's home before he takes the step of putting in a formal application would afford a good indication of his vocation and would materially cut down the leakage between applications received and Christmas time. You will agree that something is wrong when 15 candidates out of 51 accepted fail to take the religious habit. I would go one step further and say that something is also wrong when, as happened last year, out of 56 accepted for the Novitiate we were down to 40 novices by Christmas. When you go out from St.



Basil's Seminary, before you give an application form to a young man, try to get to know his parents, if possible at their home.

While speaking of the home, I draw your attention to the fact that we have a very poor record of survival among candidates for whom a dispensation had to be obtained. I think the reason is quite simple. A pastor will thunder at a girl, "How can you expect to explain to your children that it is a mortal sin for them to miss Mass on Sunday, while your non-Catholic husband never or rarely goes to church on Sunday?" In such homes there is a psychological difficulty. It is not beyond a satisfactory solution, but before

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you advice a boy to apply for the Novitiate, look to see if a solution has been found.

I have presented to you our statistics on vocations for the past four years and I have indicated that they represent a satisfactory state of health, though not what can be called an expanding economy. I have drawn attention to some common errors in the gathering of our vocations, especially to the need for attracting more of our better students, to the wisdom of not letting a boy put in an application until he has firmly made up his mind that he wants to be a Basilian, and above all to the need for a better knowledge of the candidate's family. It now remains

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to offer in a course in pastoral theology some suggestions for the future.

These suggestions are not concerned with ways of attracting a boy's interest, nor are they designed to assist you in fostering his vocation. They are limited to the subject of this lecture, the gathering of a vocation which appears to you to be ripe for the harvesting. How do you go about?

Article 321 of the General Rule states:

Members will not broach the matter to the prospective subject without first consulting the superior who will in turn examine the case with his council.

The next article requires the local council to satisfy itself on a number of points before the local superior

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invites the candidate to make application for admission to the Novitiate. My suggestion is that before you mention the matter to the local superior, you should make some discreet inquiries yourself and have that information at hand. These inquiries are for external and positive signs of a vocation. They will investigate the natural resources of the candidate and will leave to his confessor the assessment of his supernatural resources.

As a teacher the simplest of these inquiries concerns ability. Don't be satisfied with his marks. They are the result of ability plus application to studies. If you find good native ability but negligence in fulfilling the

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duties of his state of life as a student ask yourself, "What assurance have I that this same habit of sloth will not keep him from applying himself to the religious life?" On the other hand, if his good marks are the result of working twice as hard as other students in his class, ask yourself, "Will he, as a scholastic, be able to find the long hours he now needs for study in order to pass?" If possible try a little experiment. Give him, in class or out of it, some work to do where he must work under pressure, e.g. a timed test. If he goes to pieces, he is a poor risk because a priest must be able to work under pressure, e.g. the activities of Holy Week.

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More difficult, but not impossible, is visiting his home. With day schools it is often possible to find an excuse, e.g. to take him home from school in a car and drop in to say hello before going on to a meeting, a wake, etc. Or perhaps in this modern day the boy might take you in his car and if his home is near where you are going, then drop in for a few minutes.

Once you have satisfied yourself that lack of ability is not a factor and after assuring yourself of the psychological and religious soundness of his home life, the biggest hurdle remains — you must look for positive signs of a vocation in the young man. It is not enough that there be nothing against

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him. There must be something in his favor and this something includes a firm desire to be a Basilian.

What about difficult cases where you come across an obstacle. Provided the obstacle is not totally inconsistent with the priesthood and the religious life, e.g. the bonds of a valid marriage, then, before proceeding further, look for compensating factors. If one parent is not a Catholic, more than ordinary desire for the priesthood and the support of parents is needed. Obstacles are meant to bar the road to the priesthood to ordinary people. The priesthood is not for the ordinary young man. The priest must be a leader, spiritually and otherwise. Unless the young man has more

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ordinary qualities, then the obstacle bars him. Of course, the more serious the obstacle is, the greater must the compensating factors be.

(Lecture to Fifth Year Theology, summer course, July 1958)

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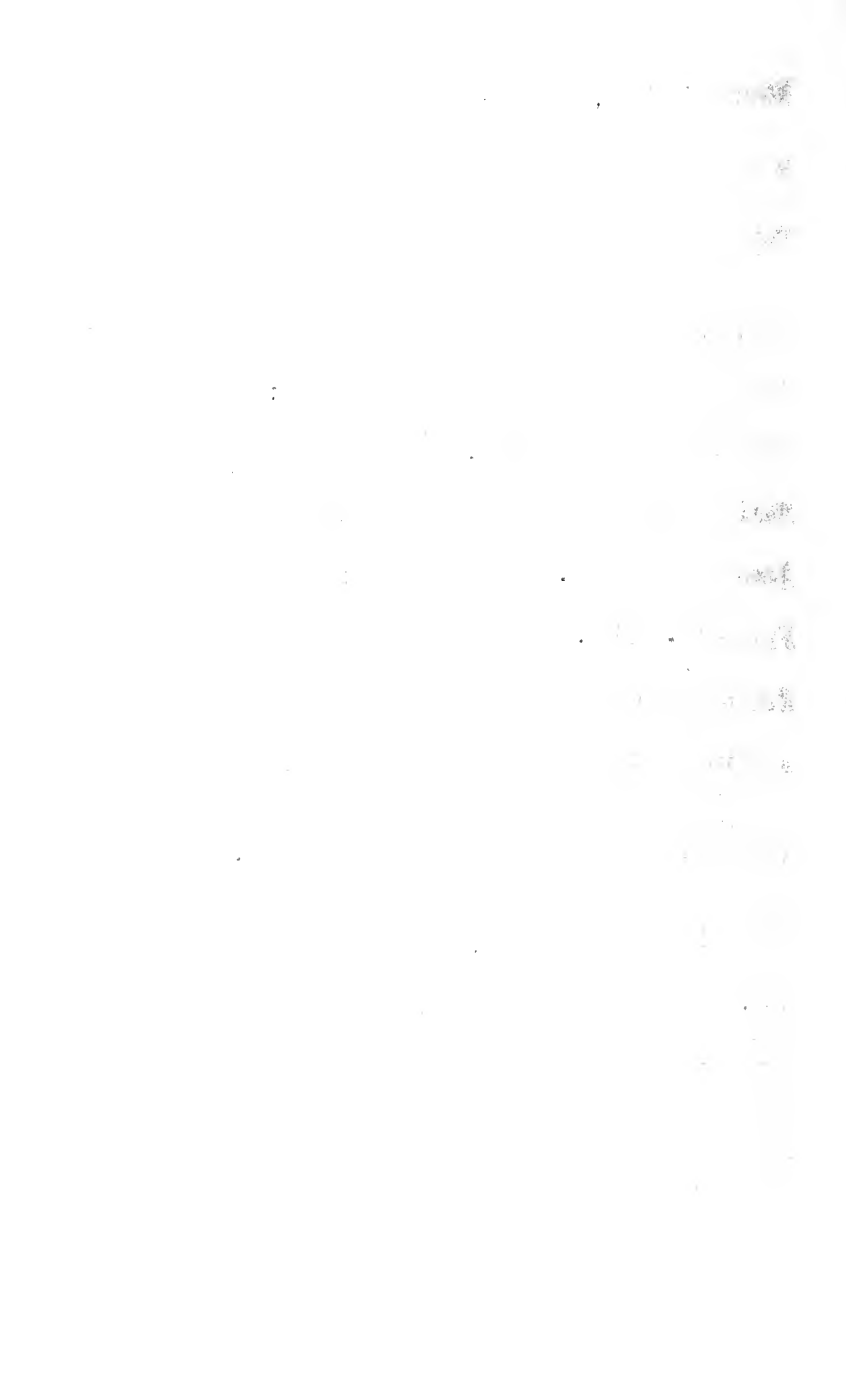
RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

1955 — 1959

The General Rule of the Basilian Fathers has a chapter with the title: "The Future of the Institute". The first part of this chapter is devoted to "Recruiting New Members". It begins:

Art. 319. All members are urged to pray daily that God may send suitable subjects to continue and to extend the work of the Institute and they are urged also to be always on the alert to secure promising recruits for the Congregation.

The Constitutions, which go back in printed form to 1878, do not mention the recruiting of new members, not even in the definitive edition approved by the Holy See on October 14, 1938. An English translation published by Father

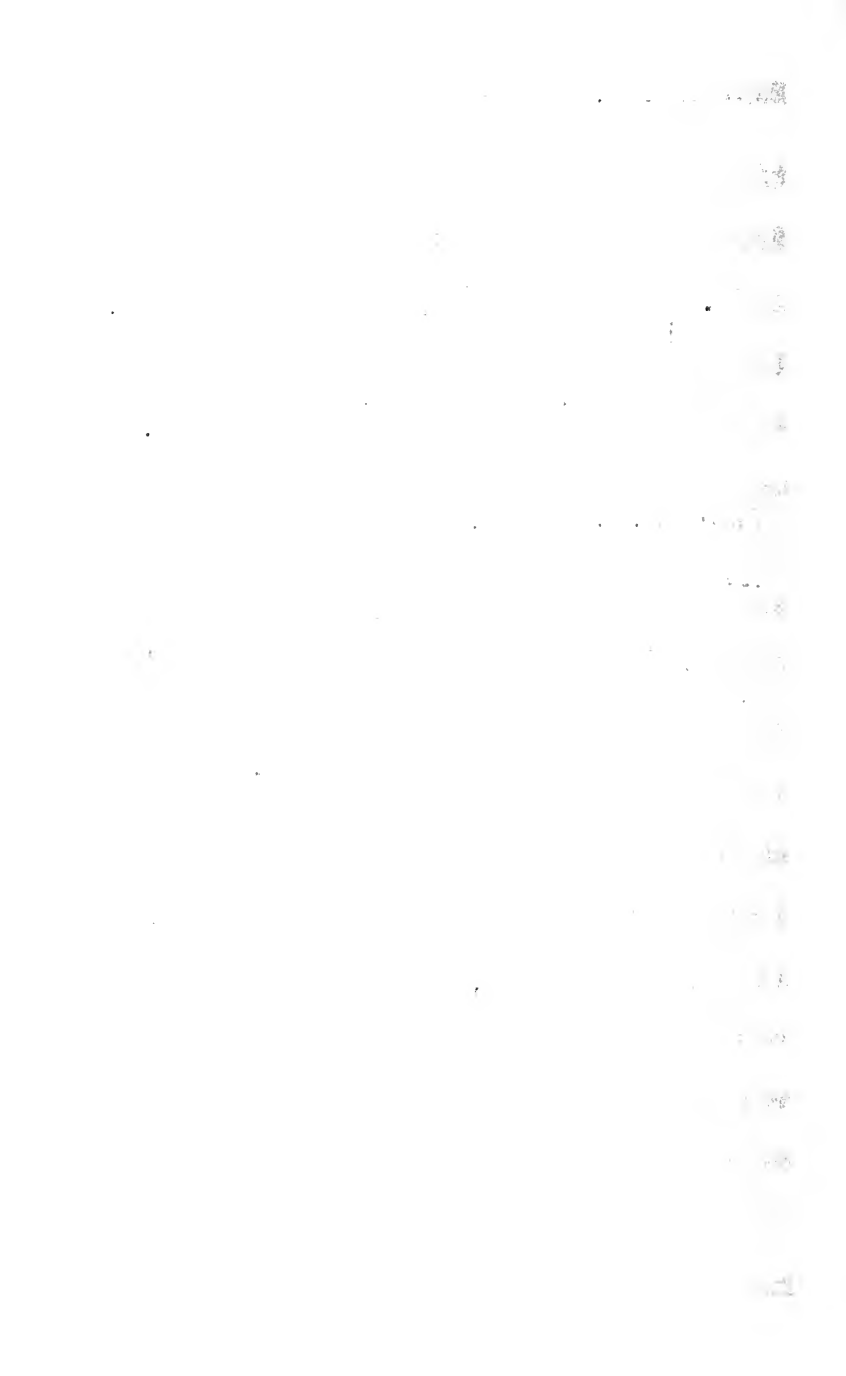


Pierre Grand in July 1908 has this to say about vocations:

5. When he receives an application, it is the duty of the Master of Novices to seek for information on the piety, character, intelligence and former life of the postulant.

Father M.V. Kelly, who had no great love for the way in which Superiors in France conducted community business, felt that this attitude was simply letting the Community die out.

About the time of Father Grand's translation of the Constitutions was published in Toronto, Canon Joseph Lahitton was writing in France a book on priestly vocations which was to become a landmark in the voluminous literature on



this subject. Up till his time spiritual writers and theologians, in France and in other countries, had emphasized the subjective element in a priestly and religious vocation. When a young man felt that he was being called by God to the priesthood, it was his duty to present himself to a Bishop for the fulfilment of his vocation, and the Bishop had the duty of receiving him and after the necessary training of ordaining him. Canon Lahitton stated that the young man did not have a vocation until a Bishop called him to the priesthood. Further, if a Bishop had enough priests to meet the needs of his diocese, he was under no obligation to ordain the young man, no matter how suitable he appeared to be, no matter

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how deeply he felt called to the priesthood. The book raised a storm of protest and in due time was denounced to the Holy See. St. Pius X had it examined, read it himself, and gave his approval to the views of Canon Lahitton.

The attitude of St. Pius X brought about a gradual change in the recruiting of vocations. In common with most ecclesiastical authorities, our General Rule had been silent on any obligation on the part of members, leaving all the responsibility to the candidates themselves. Article 319 of our present General Rule reflects the trend that followed the pronouncement of St. Pius X. The duty of seeking vocations now fell upon Bishops and Superiors. This shift

in emphasis has produced a tremendous literature. The library of St. Basil's Seminary has books by Father Poage, by Father Kane, the Proceedings of an Annual Vocation Institute held at Notre Dame University, and a host of lesser known books. It is an increasing literature, particularly in the periodical field. A check in the Catholic Periodical Index will confirm the fact that it has more than doubled over the past ten years.

The current literature on vocations may be divided into three groups. One type of book or article deals primarily with arousing interest in vocations. A second type tells how to foster the vocation of those who have shown some interest.

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The third and last group is concerned with the harvesting of vocations. This lecture will be restricted to the harvesting of vocations by Basilians during the past five years. It is not intended to duplicate the work of the annual Vocation Meeting, nor is its purpose to summarize the writings of the Director of Vocations. The purpose of this lecture is to acquaint you with certain facts, to analyze these facts, and then to suggest possible improvements in our present methods of recruiting. This paper has been restricted to the years 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, and 1959 because these years cover the term of office of the present General Council.

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Let us begin with 1959. The applications now before the General Council come from young men who know us only from the outside and who like what they have seen of our way of life. By the end of June, the Council had received 55 applications. Four formal applications have been refused, principally for academic reasons, though other considerations were important in two cases. One application has been deferred until Grade XIII results are known. Of the 50 accepted, a few received this or a similar warning:

"The General Council has expressed concern about your marks and will expect to hear from the Master of Novices that you are applying yourself diligently to the studies of the Novitiate." So far

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in 1959, one candidate has withdrawn his application, but he did so before it was actually presented at a Council meeting.

The novices now in our Novitiates came from the applications received in 1958. These young men have some knowledge of our way of life from inside and they still like it. Last year the Council received a total of 57 applications, the last coming after September 2nd. Of these six were refused and of the 51 accepted, five withdrew before taking the religious habit. Seven more left after a short trial and recently another has left after a stay of nine months. It is only fair to mention that two of

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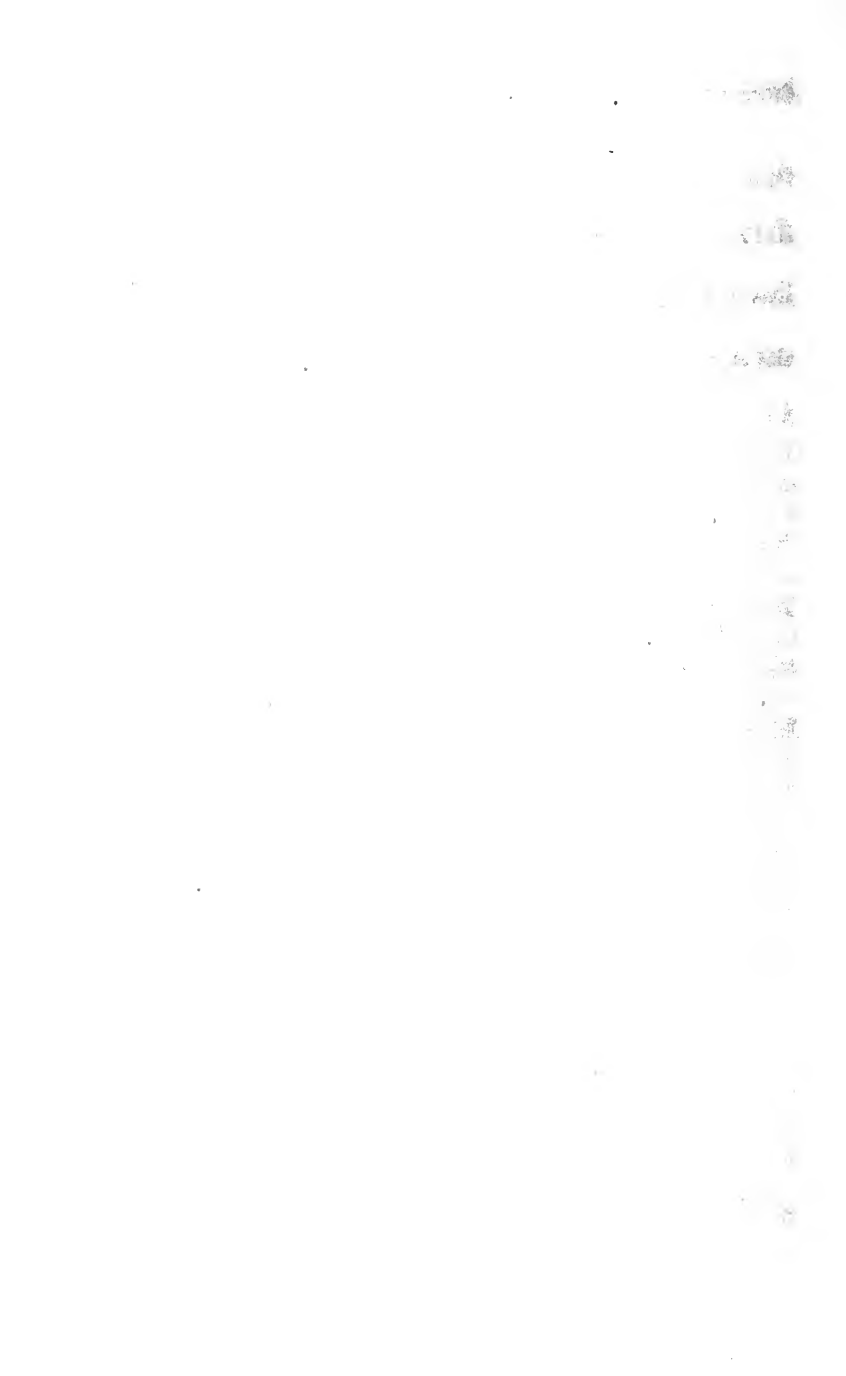
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the refusals were not formal applications but only personal letters from candidates who had no first hand information about our way of life.

Going back to 1957 are the scholastics who made first temporary profession last year and have had a year of community life. Conversely the Congregation has had a closer look at them. It has been mutually satisfactory because out of 37 novices who made profession only one will not be with us next year. Two years ago the General Council had before it 57 formal applications and only one was refused. The refusal was based on academic grounds. Out of the 56 accepted, four failed to show up at the Novitiate. In two cases pressure was



applied to steer the applicant away from the Novitiate and into a Diocesan Seminary. In one case, family reasons caused the candidate to withdraw, and in the fourth the fault was entirely on our side. The young man is reported as saying that he signed up merely to please an over-zealous Basilian. In all four cases the priest recommending the candidate was not acquainted with the family. This same year, three came to the Novitiate but did not receive the religious habit. In all three cases it can be said that no Basilian was acquainted with their home life. Out of the 49 candidates who received the religious habit, eight left shortly afterwards and cannot be said to have given

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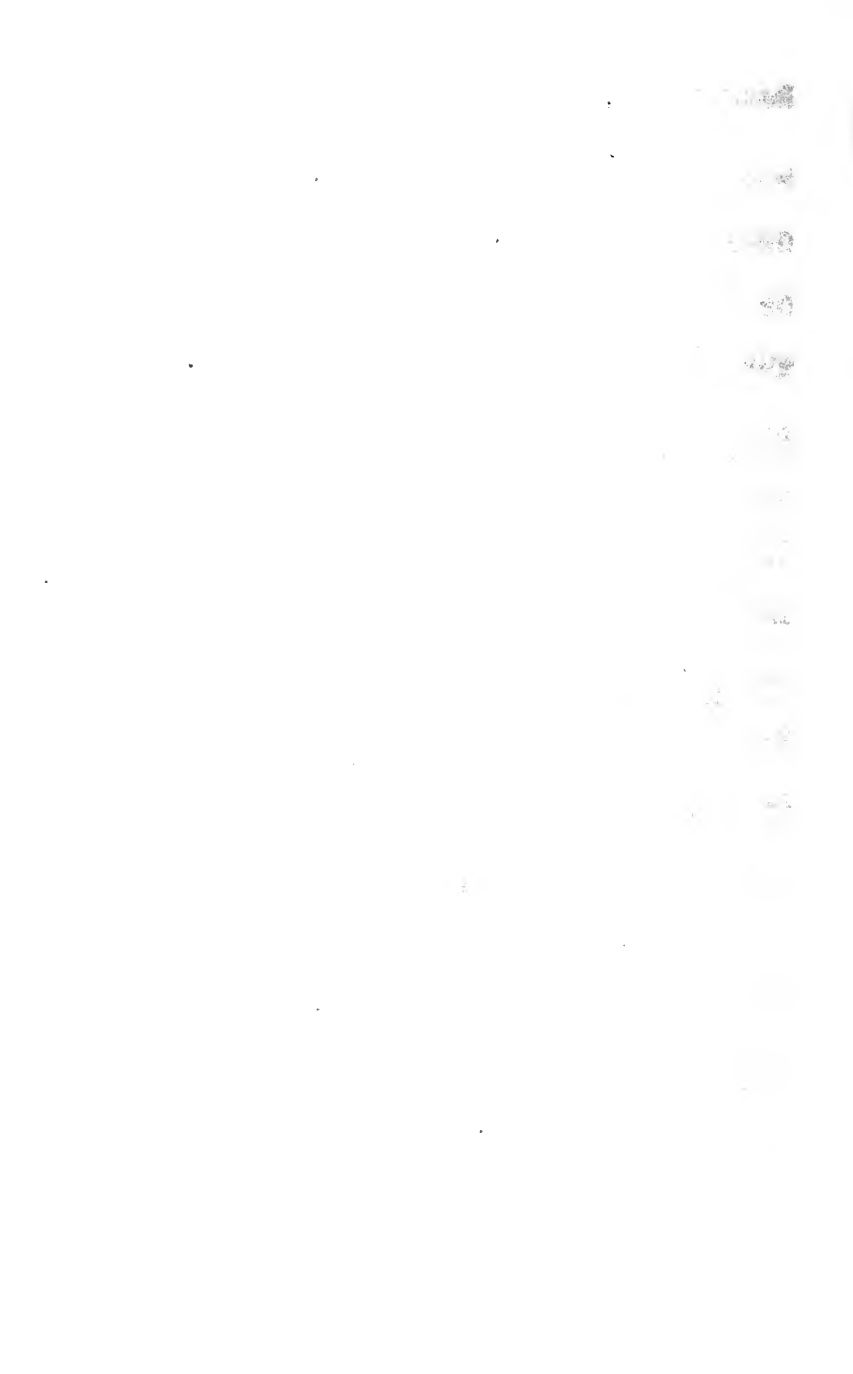
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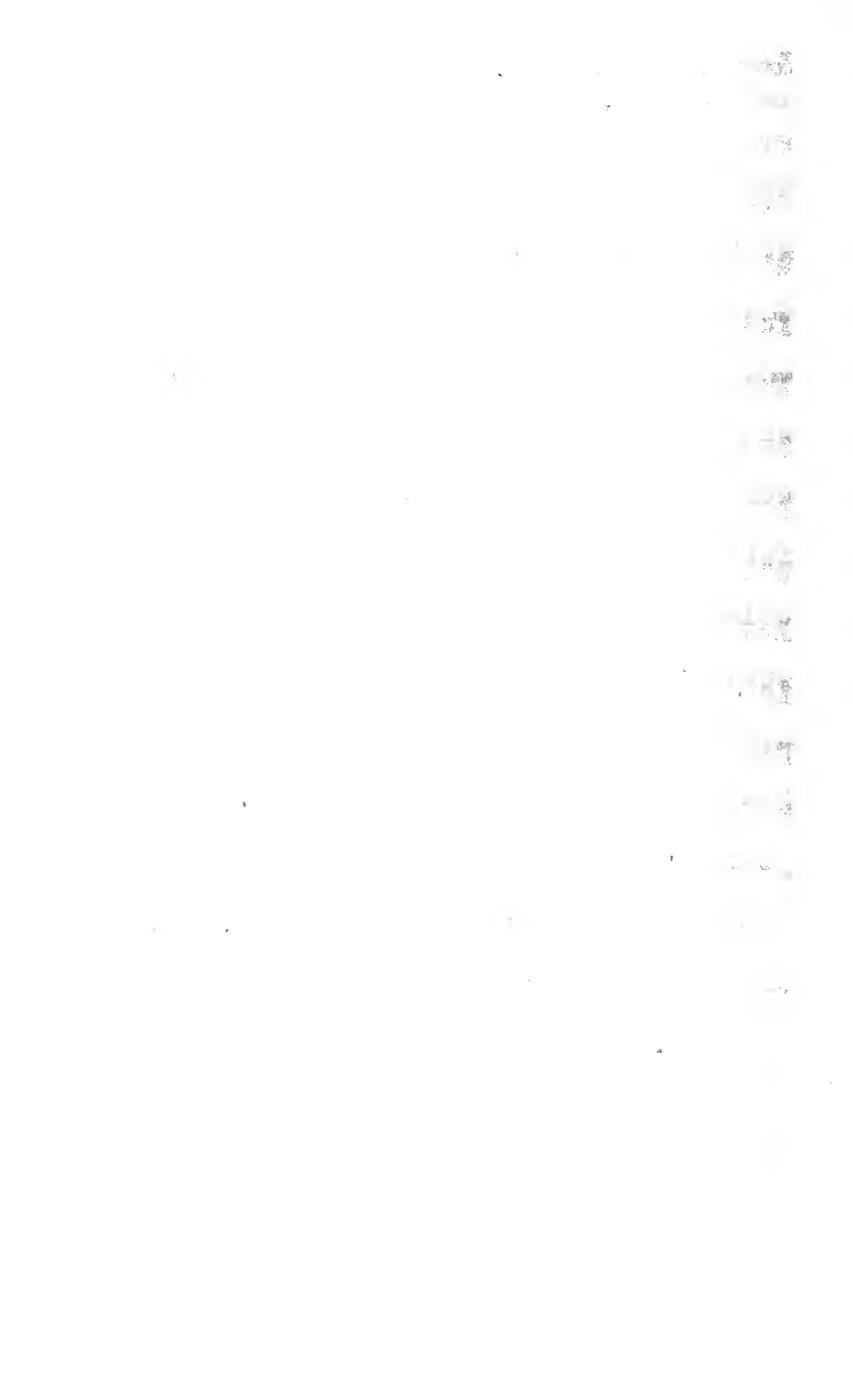
the Novitiate a fair trial. First vows were taken by 37. One has since left so that 1957 produced 36 scholastics out of a total of 57 applications.

During the Spring and Summer of 1956 the General Council considered 54 applications for admission to the Novitiate. Three were refused for lack of academic ability and two more were put off for a year on the same grounds. Out of the 51 who were accepted, five withdrew their applications, and twelve left the Novitiate. About half of these gave the Novitiate a good trial. The 34 novices who took first vows has dwindled to 31 scholastics.

The year 1955 was a year of firsts. It

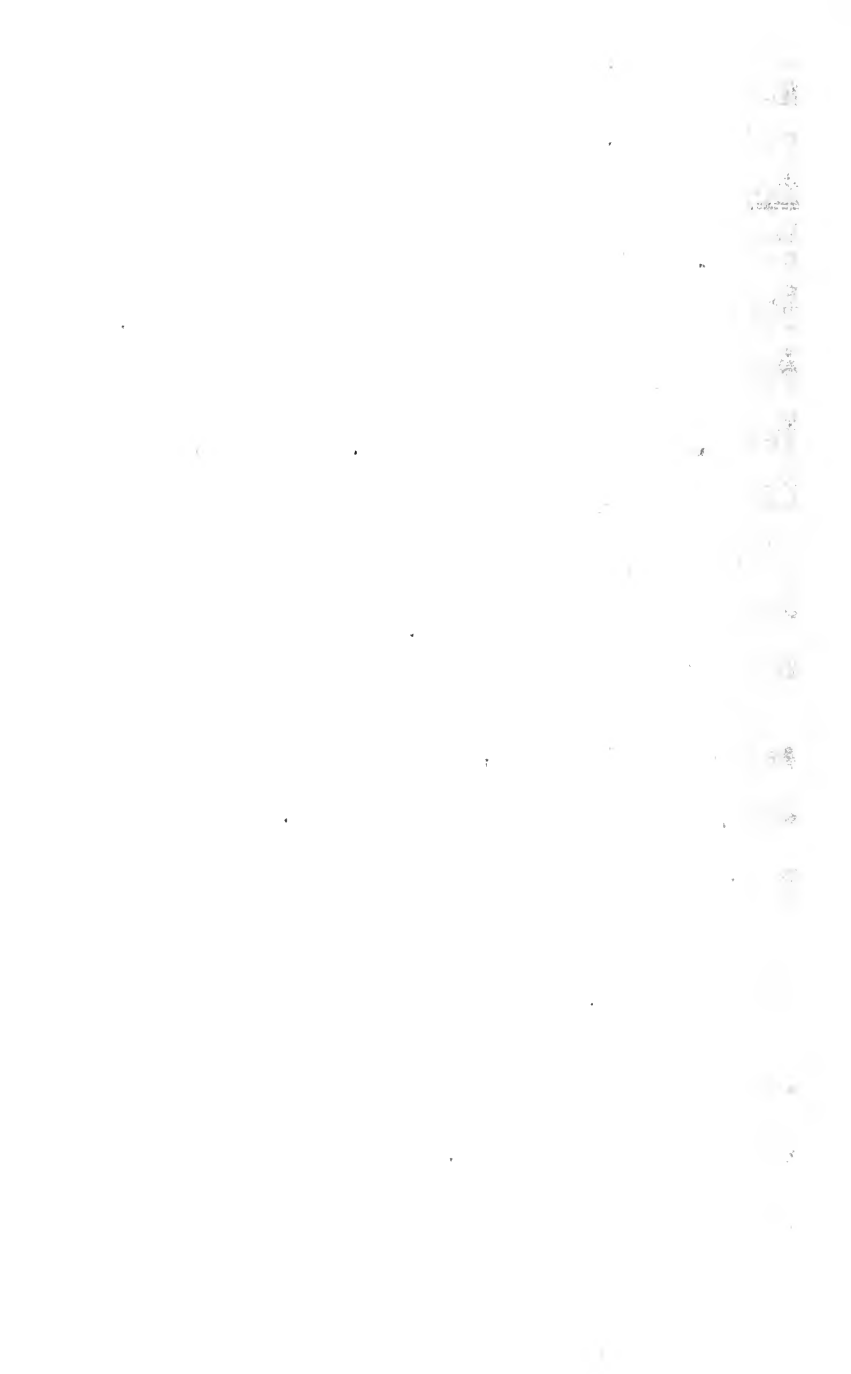


was the first year that the present General Council, elected by the General Chapter held in July 1954, acted on all the applications for the Novitiate. It was the first year that the new application forms were used. It was also the first year that a Vocation Meeting was held to encourage confreres who were active in promoting vocations. It was also the first year that the present Masters of Novices held office. This year brought a notable increase in the number of applications received, 58, the highest received by the present Council. The promise of this flood of applications was quickly shattered. Medical grounds made it necessary to



refuse two. Lack of academic ability cut the number of applications further, to 51. Of those accepted, fifteen failed to receive the religious habit. Those who came gave the Novitiate a fair trial, late in the novitiate year, numbers fell off sharply and only 21 were professed. Four of these have since left the Congregation. The net result is that of 58 applications for the Novitiate in 1955, the Congregation has today 17 scholastics in vows. Not one of these is yet in final vows, though some have been called to take them later this summer.

The following table is a summary of our vocation statistics, 1955-1959:



| Applications | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Received | 58 | 54 | 57 | 57 | 55* |
| Refused | 7 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4* |
| Accepted | 51 | 51 | 56 | 51 | 51* |
| Withdrawn | 15 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 1* |
| Rec'd habit | 36 | 46 | 49 | 46 | - |
| Professed | 21 | 34 | 37 | 38* | - |
| Left as schol. | 4 | 3 | 1 | -* | - |
| Now in vows | 17 | 31 | 36 | 38* | - |

An asterisk indicates that figures are still incomplete and may be greater or less than shown.

These are the facts of the past five years. Before attempting to analyze them and before attempting to formulate any theories and offer advice, I would like to refer briefly to the experience

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of other Communities. It has been the experience of other Communities that recruiting activities are sound when the number of novices professed equals 10% of the priests. This figure makes allowance for the normal withdrawal of scholastics before ordination and will assure an adequate supply of priests to replace deceased or ailing priests and will likewise permit the Congregation to undertake a modest program of expansion. When the number of novices professed drops to only 5% of the priests, that Community has reached the danger point. Expansion is out of the question and replacement of deceased and ailing priests may have to wait until the next ordination class is ready for active service.

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What is our own experience. In 1953, 42 candidates were accepted for the Novitiates, but only 23 were professed. At that time we had close to 300 priests so the professions were just over 7%. As a result last year two scholastics were asked to teach for a third year. In 1954, 41 candidates were accepted for the Novitiate and of these 23 were professed at a time when our priests numbered 320. Because the percentage professed was again just over 7%, a larger number of scholastics must teach for a third year in order to meet commitments made in view of better vocation numbers. Next year the cumulative effect of these two bad years will be heightened by the disastrous experiences

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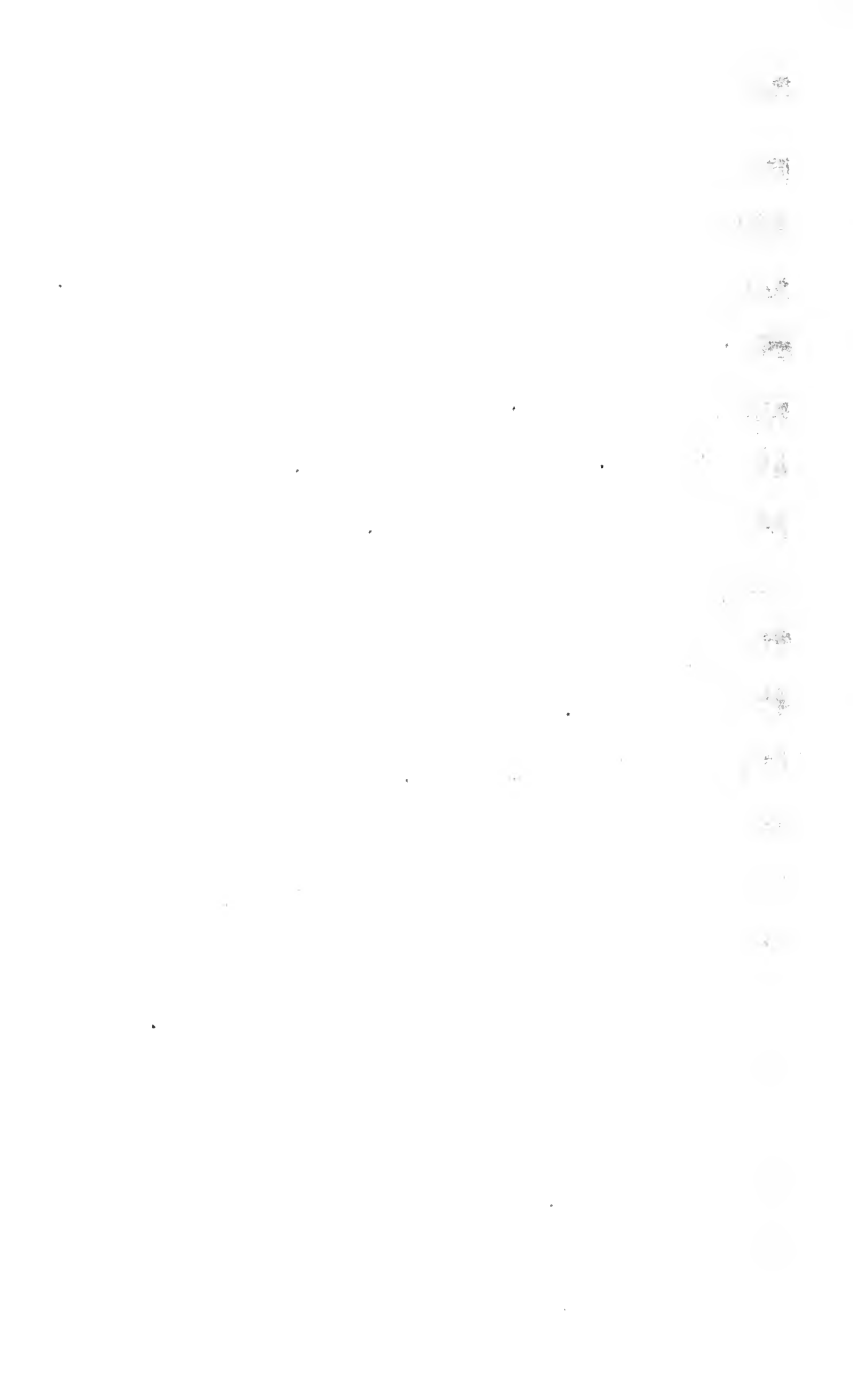
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of the class accepted in 1955 which is now down to 17 scholastics and which will provide only a dozen university graduates next Spring. In 1961 there will be some relief because 34 were professed from the class of 1956 at a time when our priests numbered about 360. This relief will continue because the next two classes are close to the 10% mark, though not quite at it.

What counts is the number of priests ordained. Our past experience has been that slightly over one half of those who apply for the Novitiate will be ordained; and that slightly over two thirds of those who take first vows will be ordained. First professions for the years 1955 to 1958 inclusive

produced 18 fewer scholastics than would have been the case if our professions had equalled 10% of our priests. On the basis of ordaining two thirds of those professed, this means a loss of 12 priests. In other words, had these years been up to normal, within a few years we could have doubled our Mexican Mission Centers without disturbing a single House. The three poor novitiate classes of 1953, 1954, and 1955 mean that in addition to the current shortage of scholastics for teaching, there will be a drop of 20 priests in the ordination classes of the near future. The handwriting is on the wall this year with only ten scholastics entering First Year Theology.



How do we compare with other religious communities in our field? The Jesuit Seminary has 15 entering First Year Theology. The Redemptorist Fathers have 12 in their new Novitiate at Sutton and the incoming class, already in their Juniorate, is expected to number 28.

However, it is not the purpose of this paper to enter into any discussion about why we are not getting more vocations. Let us turn to the recommendation form, which is the part of the application form that is most concerned with the harvesting of vocations. Failure to read and to comply with it is the direct source of nearly all defections between application and the taking of the religious habit.

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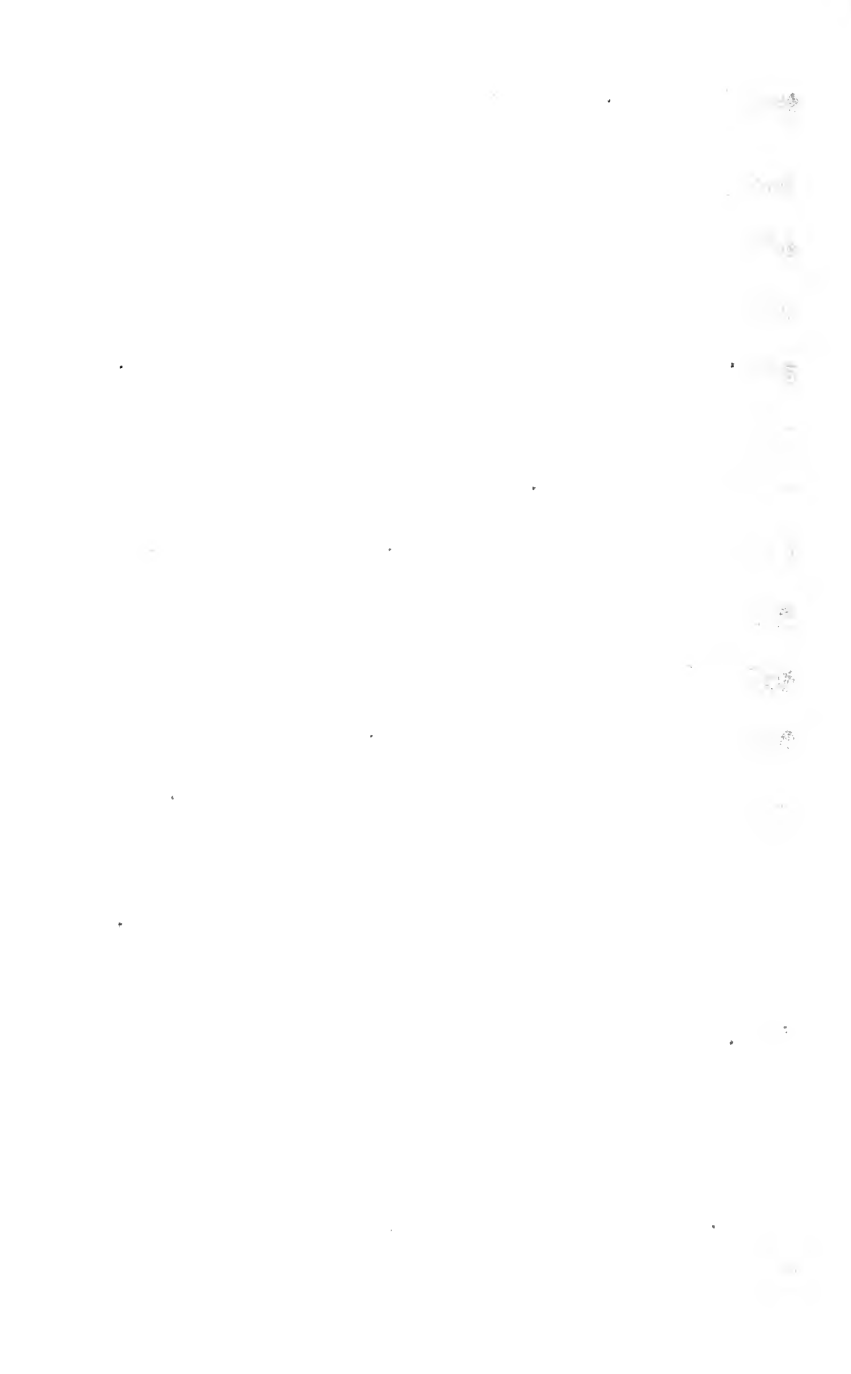
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The present application form asks a number of questions which must be answered in order to comply with Canon Law. If one parent is not a Catholic, we must know that and we must apply for a dispensation. There is no getting around that regulation. Questions that must be answered to comply with Canon Law are on the white form which each candidate must fill out. The recommendation is the green part of the form. Now it would be sufficient for an experienced priest of sound judgement to say, "This young man will make a good Basilian." Unfortunately few Basilian priests have had enough experience to be able to say this in a way that inspires confidence. The alternative, then, is to ask him a number of questions on specific



points, each of which is characteristic of the Basilian vocation. Each time he can give a favorable reply, he is sure that the candidate in whom he is interested is a good prospect. Each time he rates the young man unfavorably, he has cause to pause and to look around for good qualities to cancel out this defect. Let it be said here, that the General Council expects defects and does not hold them against an applicant when he also has something to outweigh them.

Let me go through the recommendation form for a candidate whose application was not accepted. Under Vocation the questions were answered favorably. That is true in practically every case. In a few cases the priest has been less

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than frank in answering the question about pressure.

Some have asked how can you get vocations unless you ask the boy, and once you ask, are you not exerting pressure? There is no question about the need of extending the invitation. But let it sink in.

Let the candidate have time to think it over before you ask him for an answer.

I remember that Father W.P. McGee said at a Vocation Meeting that Father John Ryan told him once at table, "Billie, you would make a good Basilian." That was the first time the thought entered his mind. Two or three months later, Father Ryan asked him what he thought about the suggestion that he would make a good Basilian. By that time the idea

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had taken root and the Congregation received a vocation it might have lost if that invitation had not been extended.

The second part of the recommendation form's first page is concerned with education. Here the Council wants an honest answer. It is a disservice to a young man to recommend him if he can not make the studies proper to the Congregation. It is a sure sign that his vocation lies elsewhere. Unsatisfactory answers are frequently given to this part of the recommendation. More than one application has come in with no attempt to answer it. Why? Because the priest could not give a favorable answer and he did not want to prejudice

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the application by giving an unfavorable one. What did he do actually? He raised hopes in a candidate which were dashed when he received a letter of refusal. The candidate knew that his school record was poor. When a Basilian priest told him to put in an application in spite of it, he felt that there was a chance for him. When it was not fulfilled, he must have felt let down by that priest.

On one application, the candidate marked himself as being in the upperhalf of the class. The priest left the questions on education unanswered, simply enclosing the school transcript. This showed that the candidate was in the lowest third of his class and had an average

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nearly five points below the minimum for admission to university. In another application, the education questions were left unanswered and without explanation, but the university transcript bore this notation, "Failed, required to withdraw." This student's record was so poor that the university was not willing to give him a second chance. No candidate with a questionable academic record will be accepted merely because some questions were not answered.

When the General Council is acting upon applications for the Novitiate, one member or another will repeatedly comment, "We do not seem to be getting the top students." A few years ago the Rector of the Jesuit Seminary in Toronto

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expressed the same opinion. He felt that religious communities were harvesting a goodly crop of ordinary vocations but very few exceptional ones. A Dominican who preached our annual retreat was of the same opinion. It was their experience. At least we can console ourselves that we are not alone. Why does our way of life fail to attract top students? One answer given to this question was that too many of our high school and college teachers are not really interested in their studies. The top students sense that quickly and lose interest in a Basilian vocation. On the other hand the weak student does not perceive this. All he knows is that a certain priest has helped him

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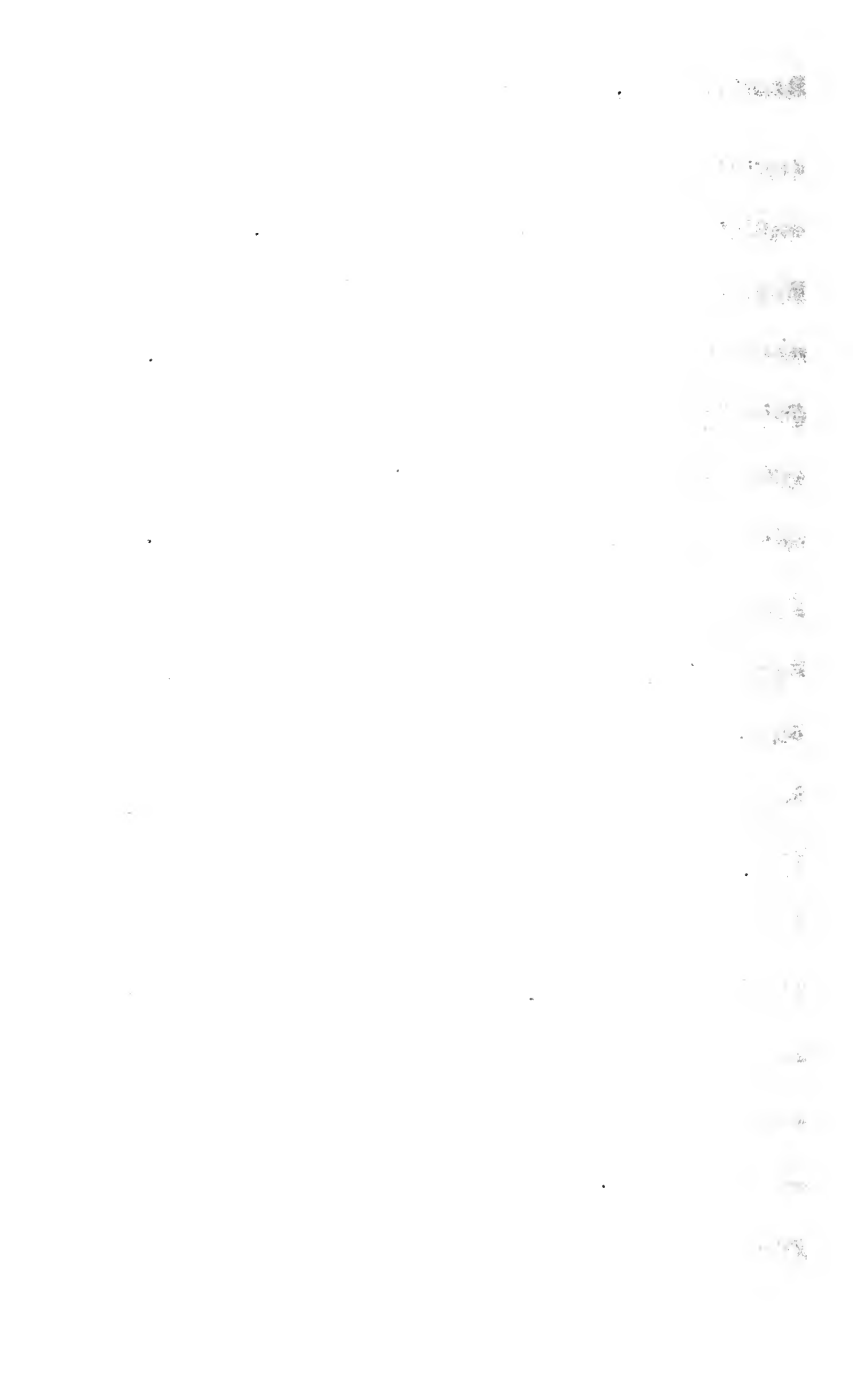
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through a difficult examination and he wants to join the Congregation. Teachers whose classroom work is consistently directed towards examination results, get good results but fail to interest the top students either in their subject or in the teacher's way of life.

Another reason assigned to our harvesting a large proportion of our vocations from weaker students is the typical North American sympathy for the underdog. This sympathy causes us to do more for the less gifted student and he responds favorably. The more gifted students are left somewhat to themselves and hence they tend away from a vocation to our life. I would emphasize at this point that there is no thought of screening



out the ordinary student. Many excellent priests have come from their ranks. Rather it is a question of attracting more of the top students. Father "Dan" Corrigan has said that we should be getting 70 applications a year. The new Novitiate at Pontiac has 49 rooms for novices. Richmond Hill has 17 single rooms, four of which are large enough for two beds. If we obtained applications from twelve top students, over and above our present applications, we would be close to the number required to keep the Congregation expanding.

For a summary of this first page of the recommendation form, let us turn to the world of sport. When a boy turns out for a team, he does not have to know

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much about the game. There is a coach to teach him. But he must have two assets — natural resources suited to that game and the desire to play it. If he lacks the natural resources, he will not, cannot make the team. If he lacks the desire to play, then he will never be a real success no matter how great his natural resources may be. Applying for the Novitiate is like turning out for a team. The boy does not have to know much about the Basilian way of life. The Master of Novices is there to teach him. The young man must have the natural resources. Questions on education explore one phase of his natural resources. Questions on vocation seek information about his desire to be

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a Basilian. If he lacks, in a notable manner, one or the other, he can never be a success in the Congregation, nor is he likely to persevere.

Has the General Council become too choosy in accepting candidates? Some would say so. What are the facts?

During the recent academic year five scholastics failed in the University of Toronto or Assumption University of Windsor. One also failed outright in the Freshman course at St. Michael's. A year ago there were failures in all three institutions. The results clearly demonstrate that some weak candidates have been given special consideration because some priest put in a special plea for them. Some day you, too, will

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be impressed with the piety and the desire of a weak student to become a Basilian. Before you invite him to make application, stop and ask yourself: "What will be the effect on this young man of possible failure in his university course? Is there other work for him that does not require university training?"

Some years ago the General Council decided that getting a degree would be a test of vocation. Since then the only exceptions have been late vocations and it would seem that these had the ability to make a university course but were not asked to in view of their age and in view of other employment for which they were suited. Communities that have lay

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brothers find it a major problem to keep them happy in a subordinate role. Will the weak candidate you contemplate recommending be content to remain in the lowest place, year after year, or will he feel that in view of his long experience in parish work, it is time he was recognized and made a pastor?

You might also ask yourself if you have enough humility to treat such a confrere as an equal and enough tact to avoid making him feel the weight of his secondary place. More than one scholastic has been deeply hurt by priests who lacked this tact and who put him in his lower ranking place. Not a few priests engaged in high school teaching have an inferiority complex in the presence of

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confreres with advanced degrees who staff our colleges and universities. Some with doctoral degrees have not been sufficiently careful of the feelings of those whom the Congregation put to work without giving them the opportunity of obtaining higher degrees.

Turning to the second page of the recommendation form, we find that it asks about parents and relatives. Time after time the answers given here are a disappointment. Have you met his father? "No." His mother? "No." His family? "No". Character and reputation of candidate's family? "Excellent". No court of law would admit the hearsay evidence put forth on this page, and yet a Basilian priest will use it in support of a priestly and religious vocation.

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Do his parents support him in his desire to be a priest? "Yes". Is there any parental opposition to the candidate being a Basilian? "None." How can you conscientiously answer these questions unless you have met and talked with his parents? You are acquainted with pressure put on a boy to go to a Diocesan Seminary. What assurance have you that pressure of a father or mother is not behind the candidate's application? It is a fact that one or more applicants come each year because a young man has fallen in line with parental wishes. Had the priest who recommended him known his family, they would have discovered this and proceeded with greater caution. Few comments are made on the home situ-2

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ation because the priest does not know it. Ask any Vocation Director belonging to another Community and he will tell you that the biggest part of his job is to visit the homes of prospective candidates. One glance will tell him whether the mother is a good manager; whether the atmosphere is religious; if the boy has girl trouble one or other of the parents will voice their doubts about their son's ability to put her out of his mind. Actually one novice in Rochester, I heard, quickly made friends over the back fence. Had the priest who recommended him been well acquainted with his home life, he would have saved the young man a useless journey and the Master some embarrassment.

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The one area in which the General Council has not received adequate support from priests who are interested in promoting vocations is in their attention to the family. If the Congregation is to obtain sufficient vocations, if the number of dropouts between the sending in of an application and the taking of first vows is to be reduced, then Basilian priests must get to know more about the family background of candidates.

While on the matter of the family, it may be mentioned that the large and poor Catholic family is not contributing its share of vocations. Our vocations are coming from the middle class and the upper class. In European countries one result of this has been the

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loss of the working class to the Church. The Church lacked vocations from among them and they did not respond to leaders from other social and economic groups. Our priests might do well to consider whether sufficient attention has been paid to obtaining vocations from such families.

On the second page of the recommendation from comments are invited whenever there are irregularities in the home life. This includes comments whenever one parent is not a Catholic, and when one parent is not of the Roman Rite.

In the past some priests have urged the acceptance of candidates whose health was not good. Generally speaking there

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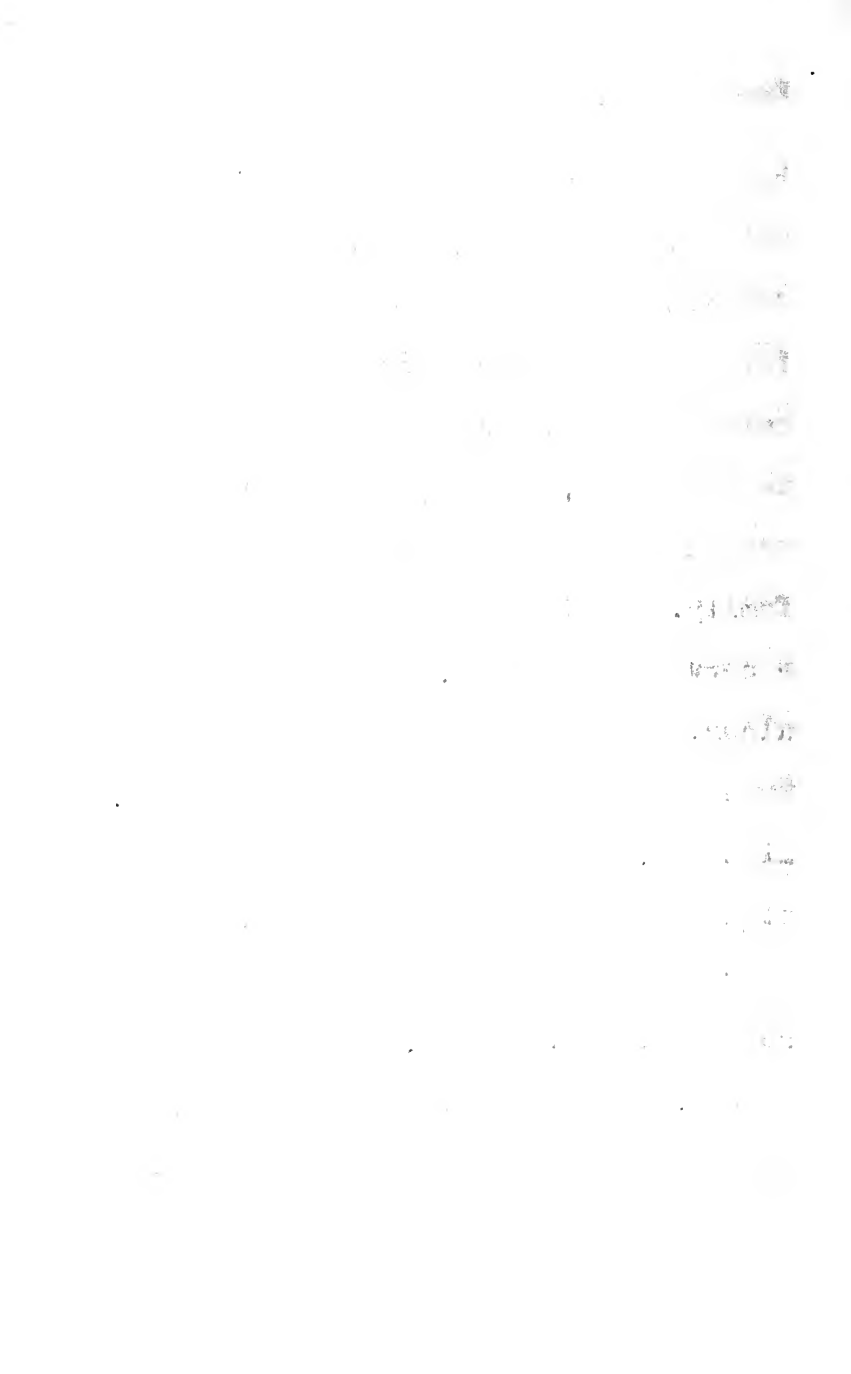
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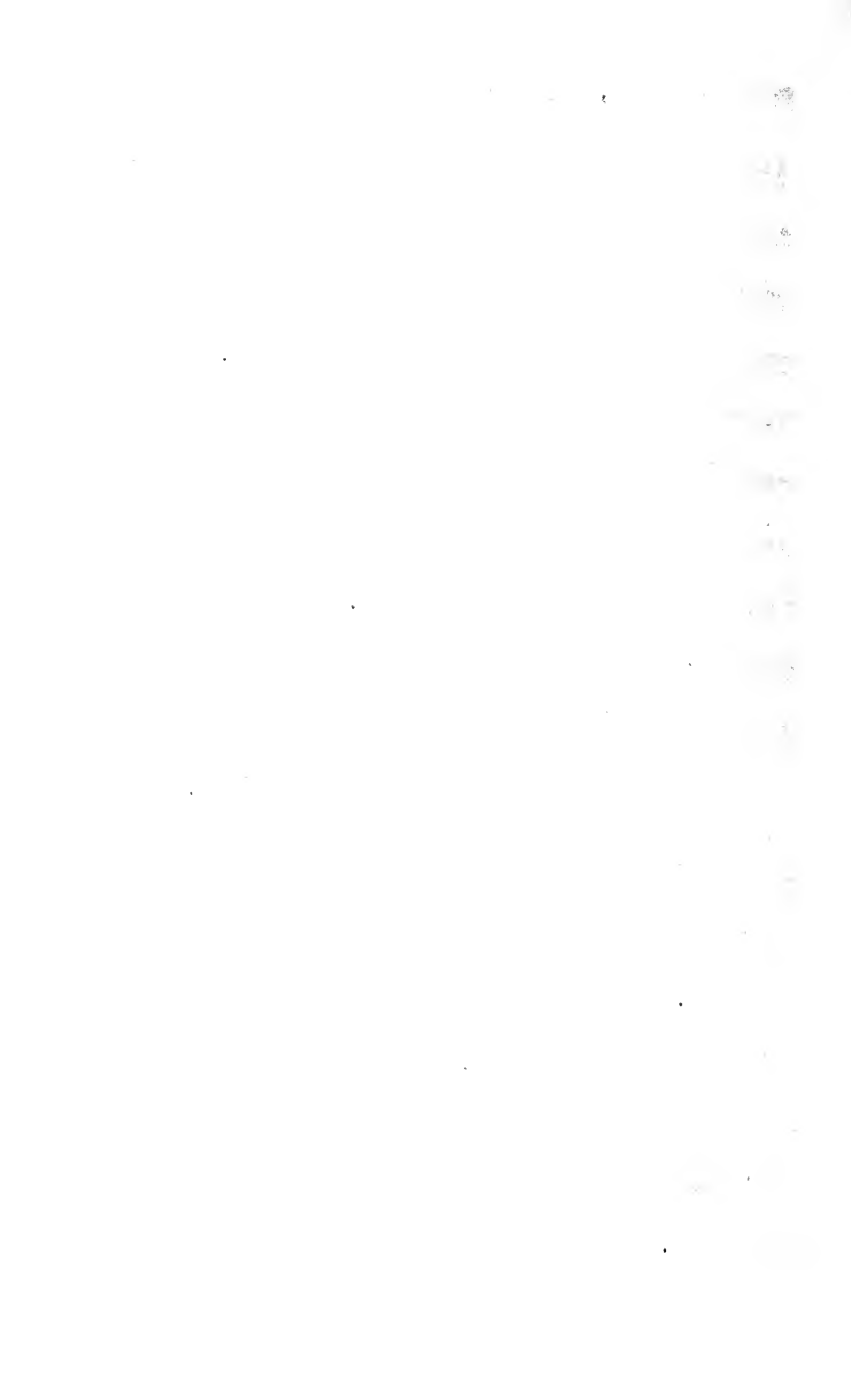
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has been a marked improvement in this matter. The Council does not require perfect health, any more than it asks for perfect virtue. It does require normal health. Attention may be called to one point, namely, any taint in the mental health of the candidate or his family. It is no more disgrace to have a nervous breakdown, than to have an ulcer. A candidate suffering from some types of ulcers would not be admitted. Likewise, certain mental defects preclude admission, others do not. Whenever a young man states that a close relative, i.e. father, mother, brother, sister, grandparent, uncle or aunt, has suffered a "nervous breakdown", etc.,



it is helpful to obtain a medical opinion as to the nature of the breakdown and as to the likelihood of it affecting the candidate in the future. This opinion should be obtained before the application is sent to the General Council and if possible from the physician who treated the relative. It is embarrassing to the young man to receive a letter asking for it before a decision can be reached on his application.

The third page of the recommendation form draws attention to personality traits. Unfortunately the answers given are rarely helpful. It would seem that the priest recommending a candidate is afraid to admit that he is less than perfect. When a priest always marks

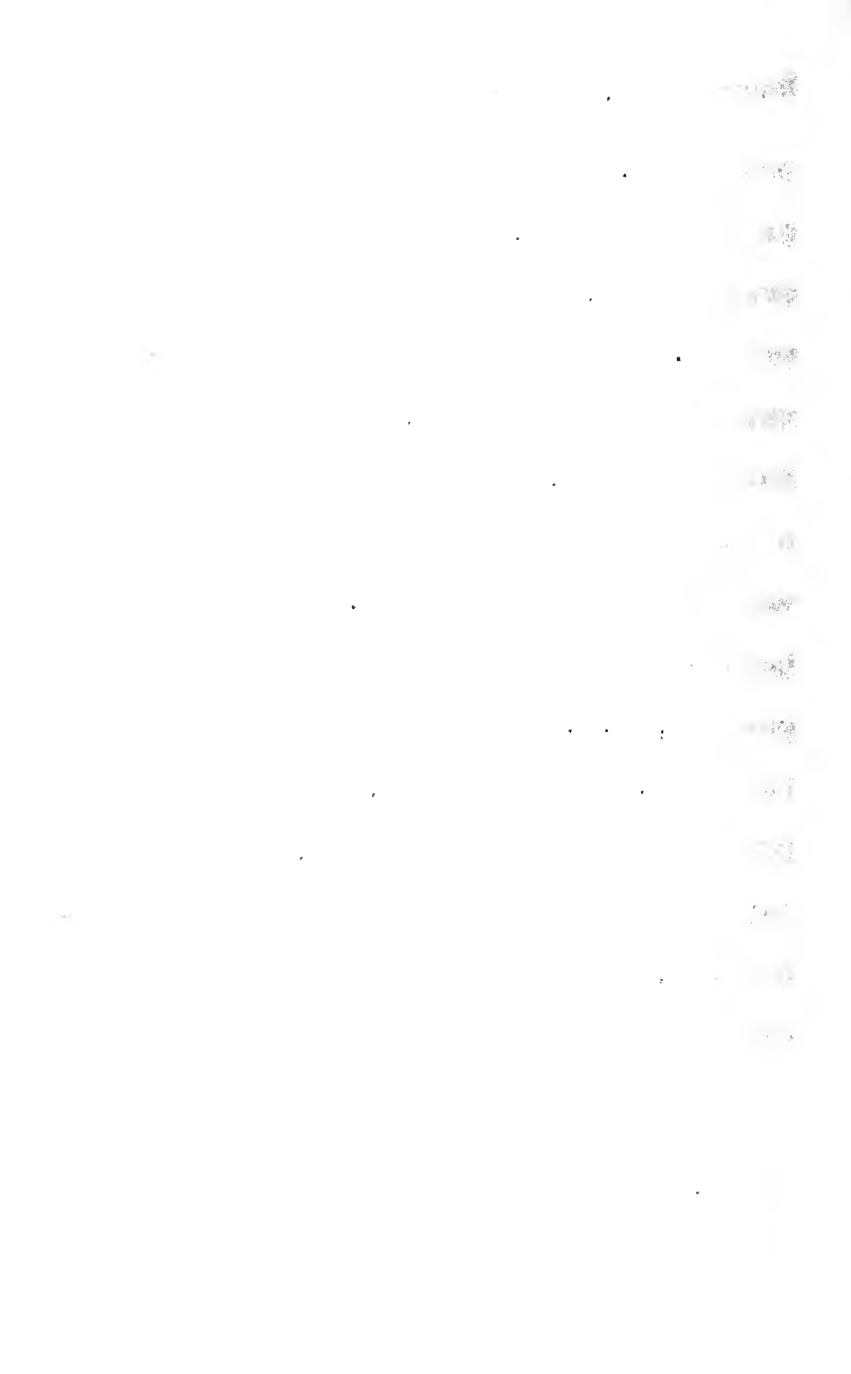


high on personality, then the Council does exactly what a University does with the marks submitted from certain high schools, it downgrades them. The application form means exactly what it says when it states that "it is a disservice to the candidate not to reveal his weakness." Such extravagant marks cast doubt on the observations the priest may make.

On the last page is space for remarks. No application should be sent in without something being written here. This is the place for the priest's estimate of the candidate's worth. If the candidate is an average prospect, with no irregularities at home, nor in his school work, the remarks may be as brief as, " a good

prospect". If there is anything out of the ordinary, attention should be drawn to it, whether it be in his favor or not. Thus if there are other vocations in his family, the remarks would include, "another vocation from a fine Catholic family with an excellent record of vocations". On the other hand the remark could be a word of caution, e.g., "must be kept at his studies". If necessary, or if the priest is in a writing mood, the remarks may be continued on the back of the page. However, in no case should this space be left blank.

Something has to be said about impediments. The wisdom of the Church has set them up because long experience has



shown that such candidates are not ordinarily satisfactory. Provided the obstacle is not totally inconsistent with the priesthood and the religious life, the Holy See will grant a dispensation for a good reason. More than once the Superior General has been embarrassed by receiving an application with an impediment indicated but with no reason given for seeking a dispensation. It is the mind of the Church to exclude from the priesthood the ordinary boy who comes under an impediment. Therefore, no boy of ordinary personality, ordinary piety, and ordinary scholastic ability, should be invited to apply for admission when there is an impediment barring his path. There must be some

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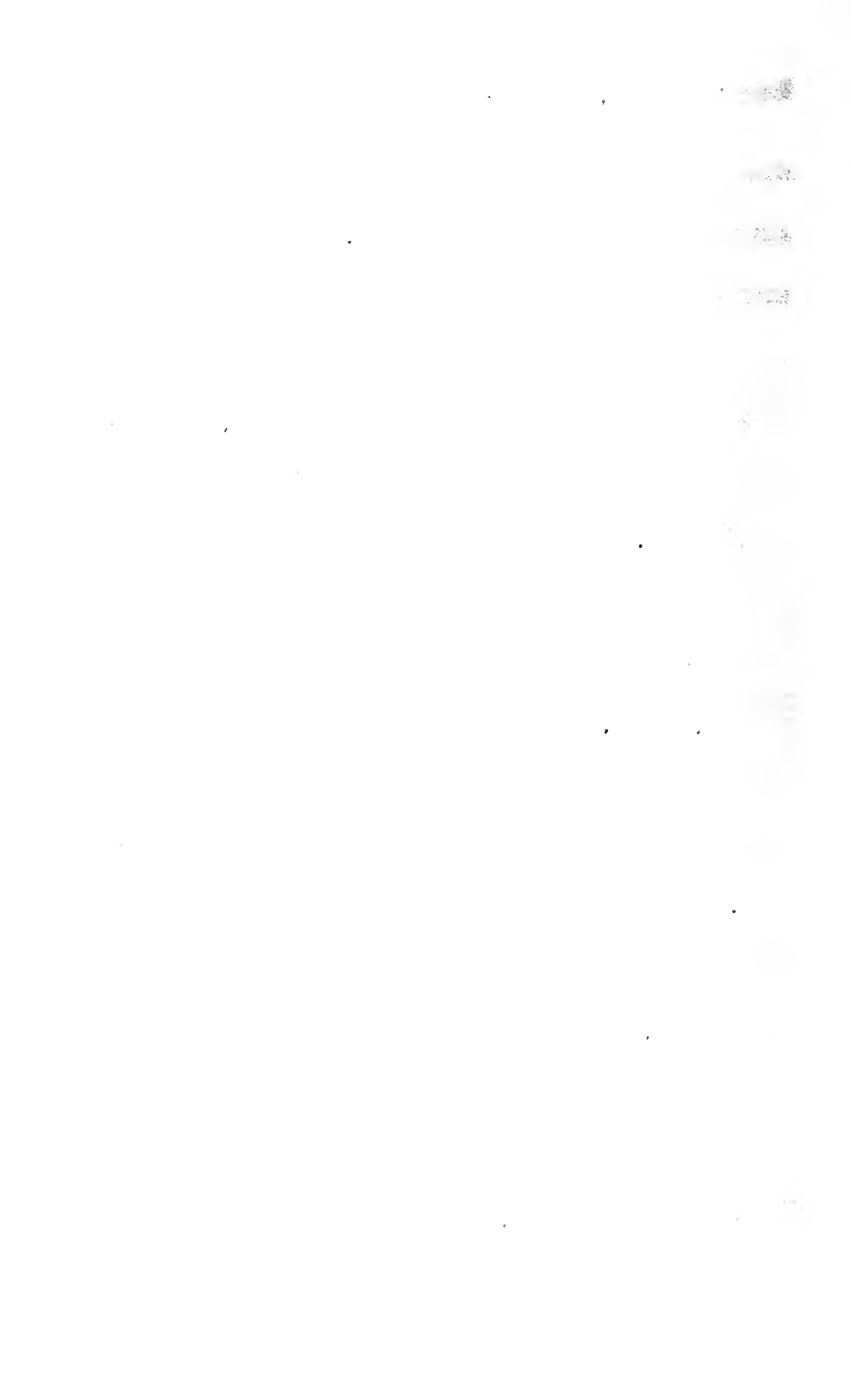
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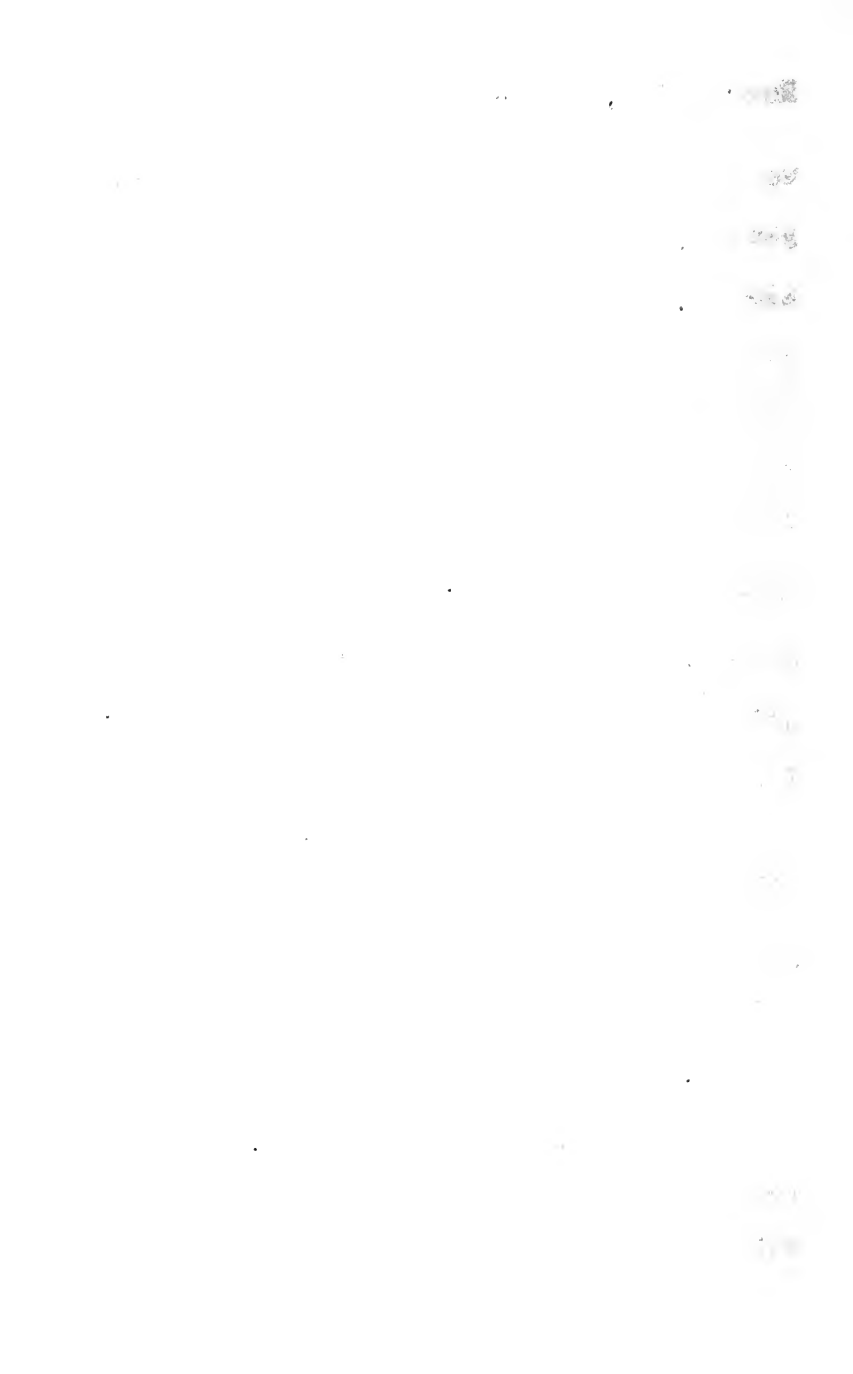
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special quality to justify departing from the established law. Fathe Terence McLaughlin has reported that our losses from candidates for whom he has obtained dispensations are high, actually as high as the losses in a minor seminary. This does not mean that a priest must rule out immediately a young man whose parents are not Catholics, etc. It does mean that he must look for and find some signs that this prospect has qualities beyond the ordinary. Those of you who know one of our priests for whom a dispensation was required, will agree that those who persevered to ordination did have the special qualities required by the Holy See. Conversely, when those qualities



were lacking and the candidate was received, in most cases he did not persevere.

The plea for better recommendations made in this paper must not be taken as a condemnation of the work being done by many of our priests. In some cases there has been negligence, in others the omissions were an accidental oversight. The majority of the applications come with proper recommendations. I would like here to express in particular my personal appreciation of the way applications are handled by Aquinas Institute and St. John Fisher College. They are sent in early, in April or May. They are usually accompanied by all the required documents. This makes it easy



to obtain Testimonial Letters and dispensations when needed. It would seem that the care taken in handling applications by our priests in Rochester is preceded by a careful screening because during the past four years only one scholastic from the Rochester area has withdrawn and only two novices. Moreover during this period only four applications were refused or withdrawn. These low figures are not the result of a lack of vocations. During the past year the 51 priests teaching in Rochester were backed up by 47 vocations ranging from novices to priests on graduate studies, and all from the Rochester area.

(Lecture given to Fifth Year Theology, summer session, St. Basil's Seminary, July 1959)



BASILIAN VOWS

1822-1922

When the revision of the Novitiate Rule was begun a few years ago, it was my task to read through the old copies and to put each article of these earlier rules on a separate sheet of paper. These were then gathered together, some under the proposed new articles so that the priests on the revising committee might see at a glance how deeply rooted each article was in our tradition; others were kept separate so that they might know what was being changed. With this information before them the committee proceeded to the work of adaptation and renovation urged upon all

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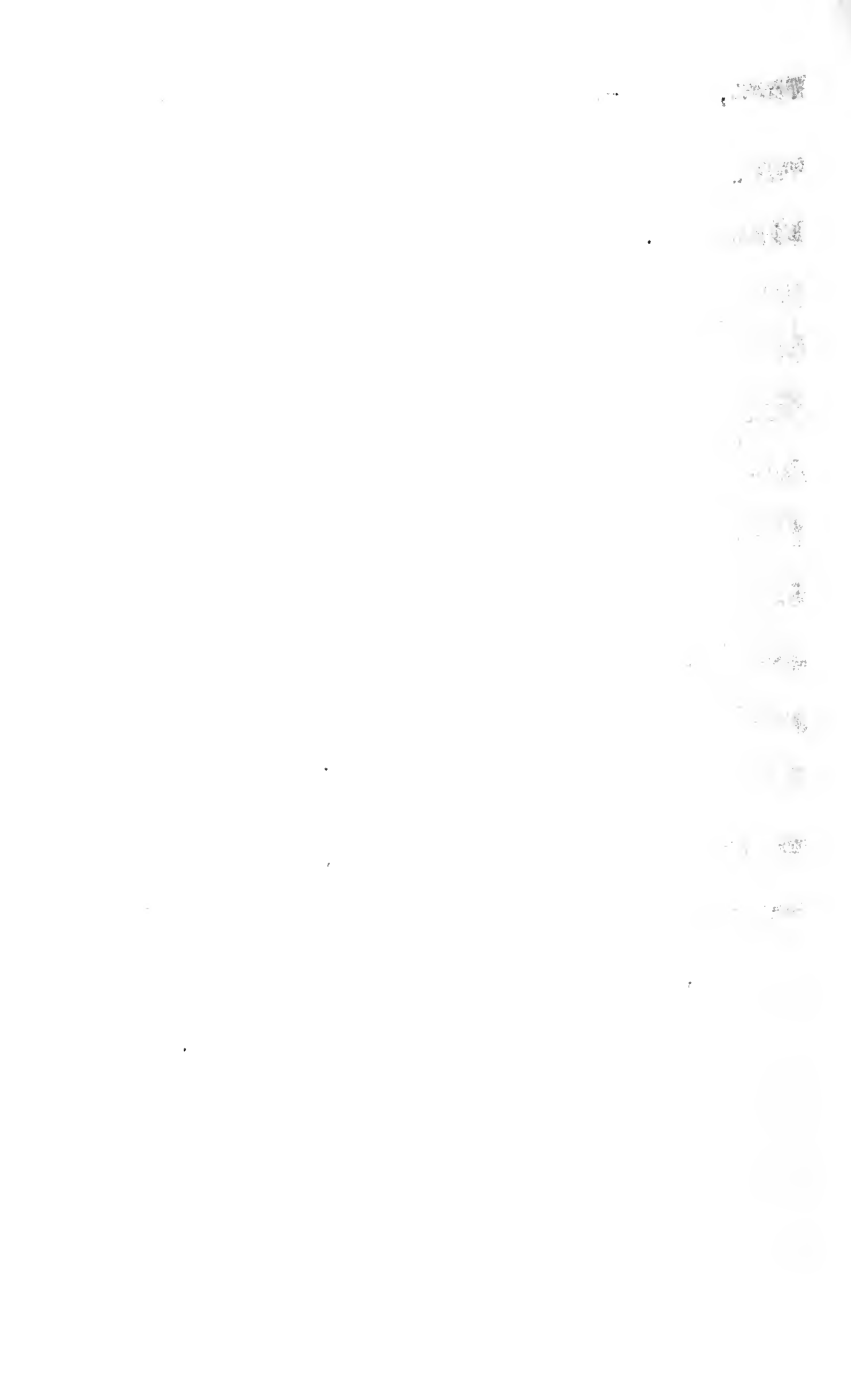
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religious communities by the late Pope Pius XII.

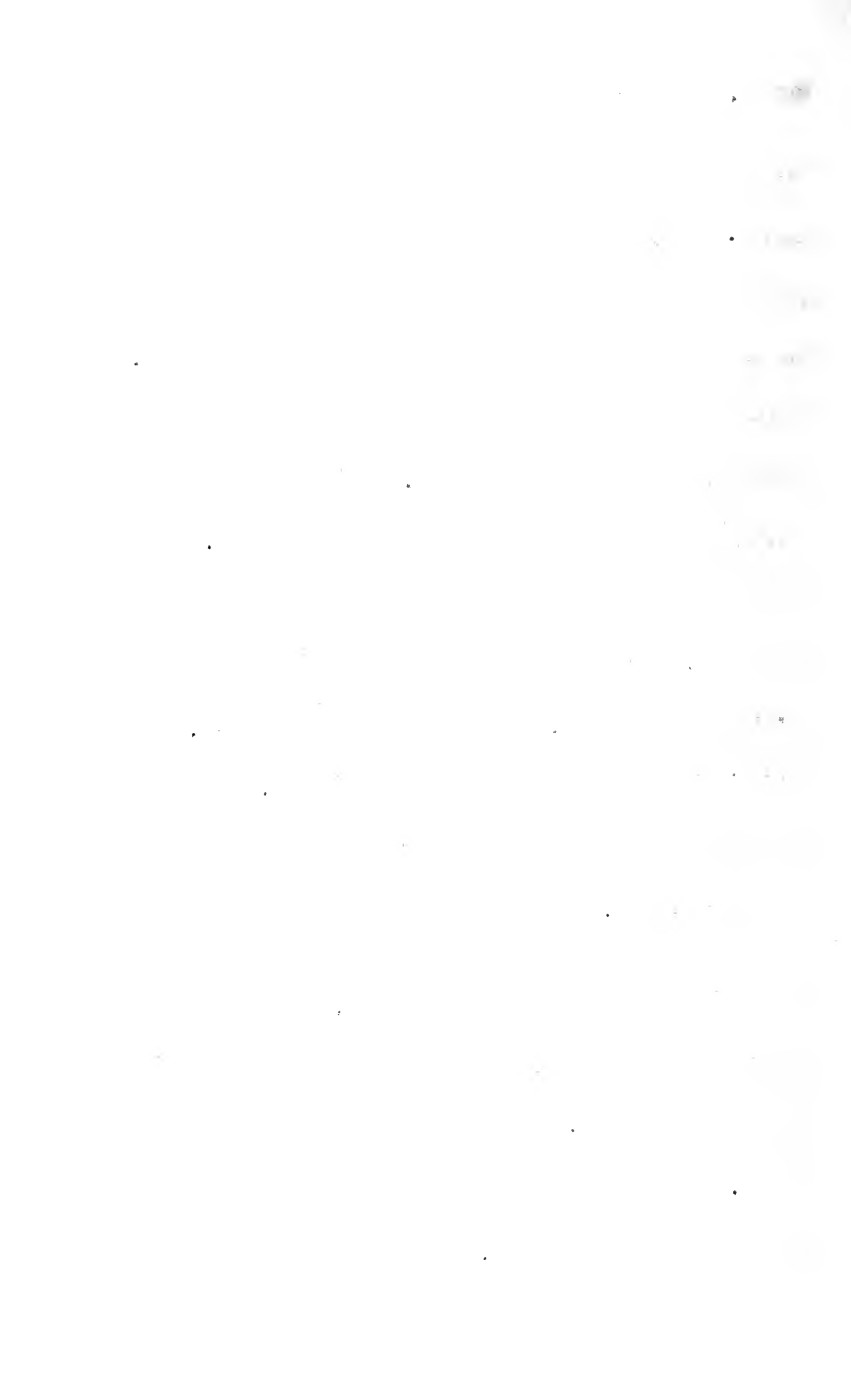
It will be the purpose of this conference to outline the history of the taking of vows in our Congregation that you may learn how Basilian life was shaped in the past and that you may understand how changes are to be introduced in the future if we would be faithful to our traditions.

In the Annuario Pontificio, the official yearbook and directory of the Catholic Church, under the heading "Religious Societies of Priests Without Vows", first place belongs to the Congregation of the Oratory founded by St. Philip Neri and approved by the Holy See as a



"Congregation of Secular Priests" in 1575. The Oratorians are diocesan priests who do not leave their diocese to establish houses in other dioceses. Others may copy their way of life and form their own Oratory. That is what Cardinal de B;rule did in France. Today the French Oratory is more important for the religious communities that grew out of it: the Eudist Fathers, the Sulpicians and the Vincentians. Of these the Sulpicians are important in our history.

Our first Superior General, Father Joseph Lapierre, began teaching in his rectory at St. Symphorien-de-Mahun in 1798. When his school was transferred to Annonay in 1802, the Vicar General



of the Diocese of Viviers, Father Léorat Picansel who was Sulpician trained, composed a Rule for the Staff which began:

The Head of the Institution of Annonay and his colleagues, all being priests or aspirants to the priesthood, it is absolutely necessary that they lead a truly ecclesiastical life, that is to say, be always usefully occupied and always a source of edification.

Without forming a Congregation, or a moral person, the spirit of their vocation requires that, being all clergy, living under the same roof and partaking of the same table, they follow a Rule of Life in which work follows prayer, and prayer work so that every moment of the day may be occupied with something suitable to the holiness of their calling.

Father Lapierre and his associates were called the Teaching Priests of Annonay to distinguish them from their colleagues

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in the Diocese of Viviers who were engaged in the parochial ministry. On September 15, 1822, Fathers Joseph Lapierre, Vincent Duret, Augustin Payan, Jean Polly, Pierre Tourvieille and Julien Tracol wrote to their Bishop asking permission to form a Congregation and stating:

The sole end of this Congregation will be to procure the glory of God by the sanctification of souls through the exercise of the entire ecclesiastical ministry in teaching and preaching.

The Bishop gave his consent in a letter dated November 15, 1822, and on November 21st following the first General Chapter was held. Father Lapierre was elected Superior General, but the election of a Council was deferred at the request of

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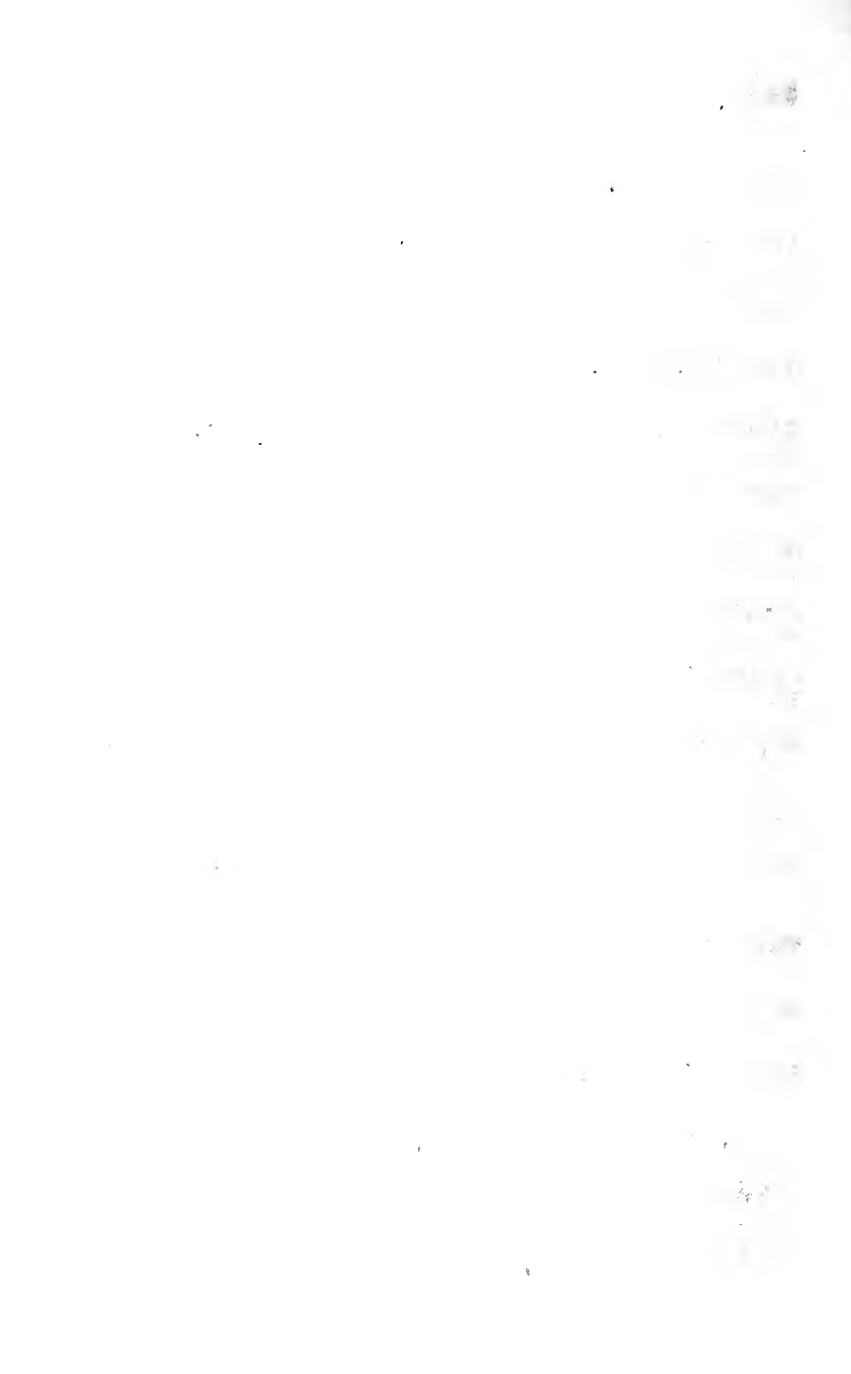
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the Bishop. On this same day the founding priests made the promise that bound them to their work of education and to one another. This promise did not include the three vows of religious. It was simply a promise of stability by which members undertook not to withdraw from the Society except for a grave reason and then only after notifying the Superior in writing of their intention, not once but each year for three years before it would become effective.

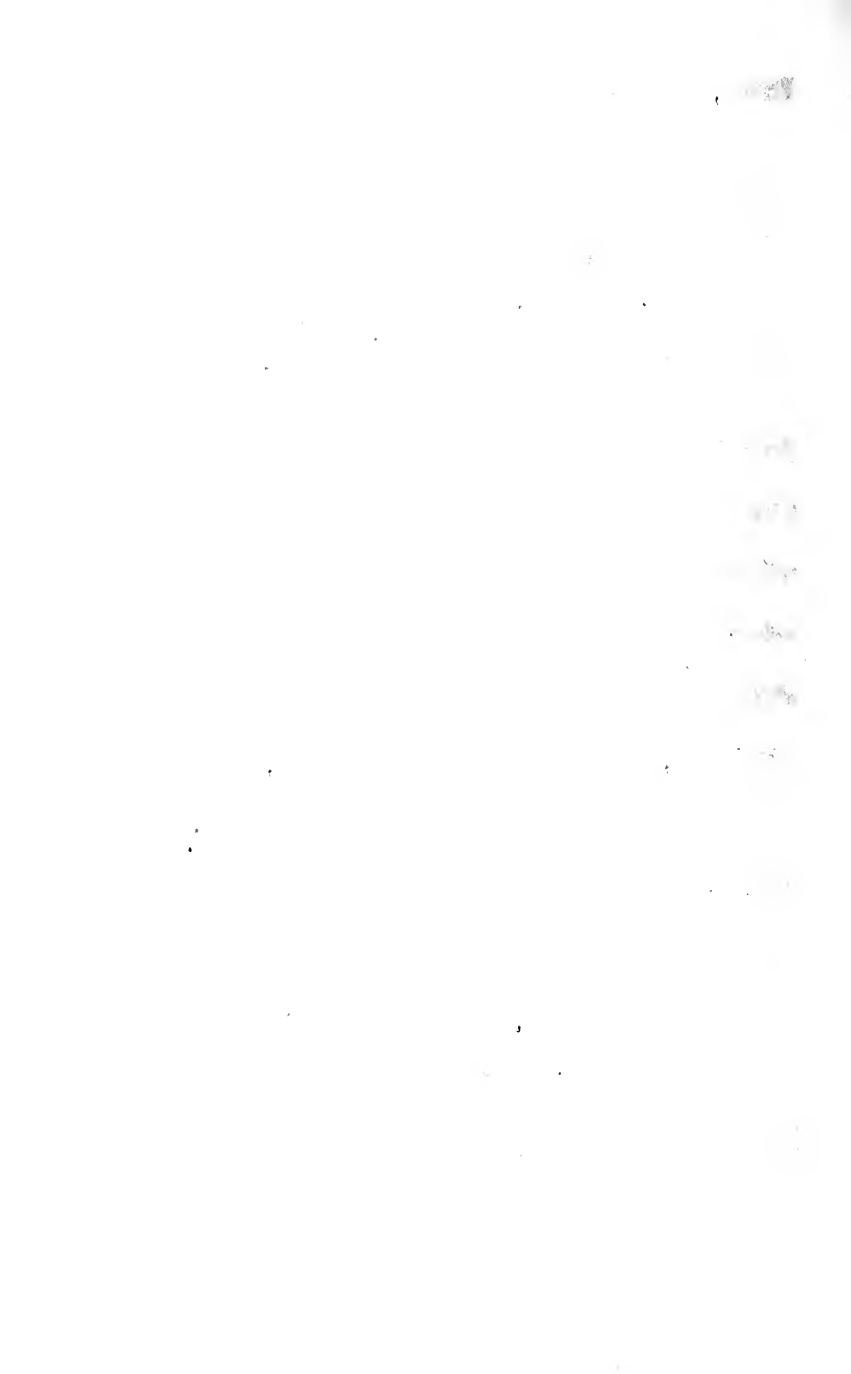
The first Basilians considered themselves to be secular priests and as such signed this declaration in 1828:

I, the undersigned, declare that I do not belong to any religious community approved by the Church or sanctioned or not sanctioned by the State, not considering as



a religious congregation in the sense of the decree of June 16 a Society of a few priests known in the district as the Society of St. Basil, patron of the College of Maison Seule, which Archbishop d'Aviau founded.

Not long after this our Founders felt the need of a higher approval than that of their own Bishop and in 1837 they addressed a petition to the Holy See which was supported by the Bishops of Viviers, Grenoble and Valence, and the Archbishop Administrator of Lyons. On September 15th of the same year Pope Gregory XVI decreed that the Institute of the Society of Priests of St. Basil was to be praised. It is from this decree that our Congregation has its precedence in the ranks of religious, immediately before the Missionaries of the Sacred



Heart who obtained their decree of praise in the following year.

The effect of this Roman decree was to change our dependence from a residential bishop to the Congregation of Religious. Nevertheless the Society remained an association of secular priests who lived in community with neither public nor private vows.

About this time two priests of the Diocese of Viviers and graduates of the College of Annonay won a national following among the clergy of France with their claim that the ministry of parish priests was of divine origin and consequently the Bishop governed his Diocese in conjunction with his priests. To meet

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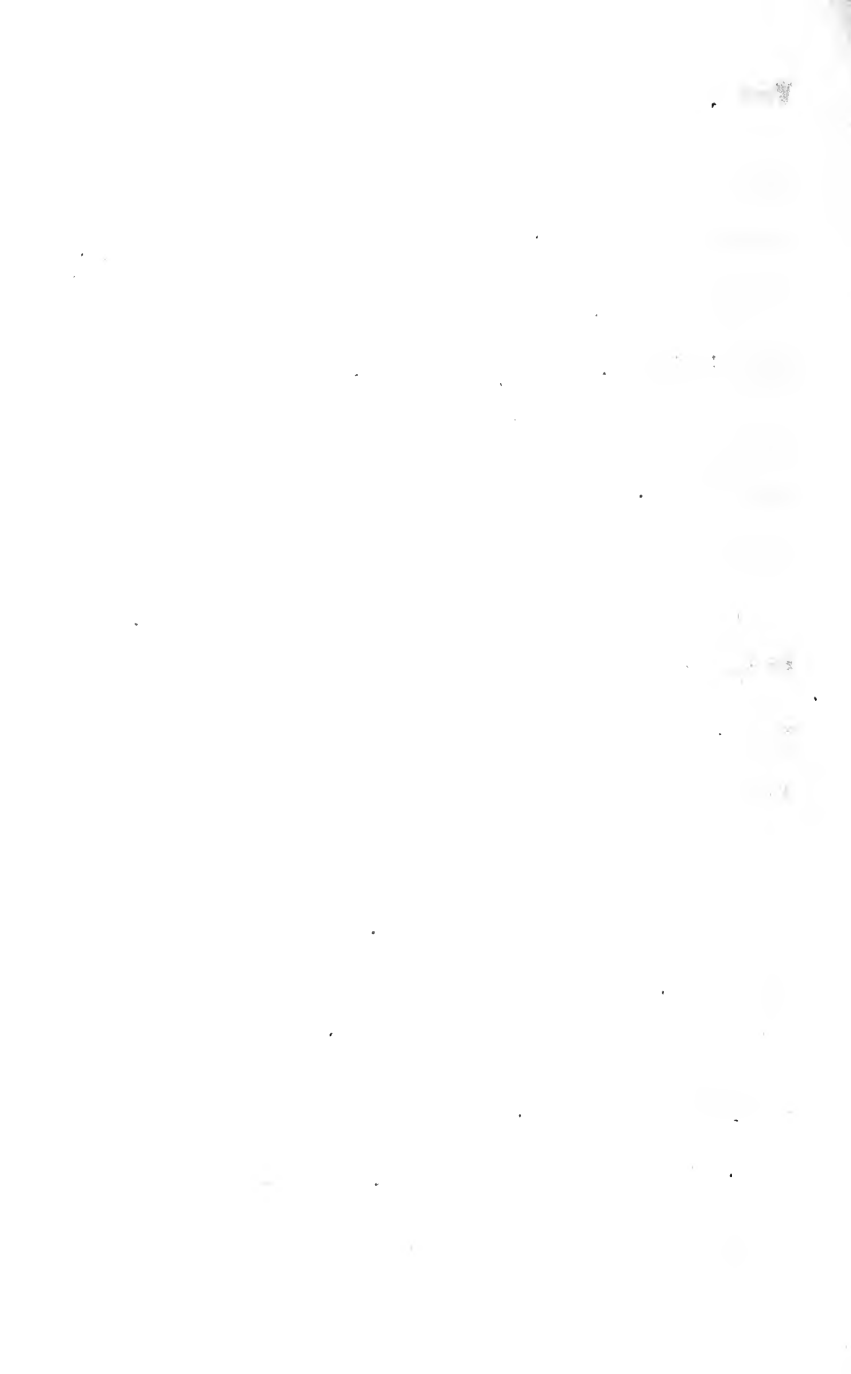
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this delicate situation the Holy See named a young Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Father Joseph Hippolyte Guibert, Bishop of Viviers. Within four years he received the submission of the Allignol brothers. Promotion to the Archbishopric of Tours and then the post of Cardinal Archbishop of Paris lay ahead of him. This incident had a profound effect on the future of our Congregation because in his pastoral visitations to the College of Annonay he suggested that Basilians ought to take vows. Father Julien Actorie, who was elected Superior General after the death of Father Pierre Tourvieille in 1859, wrote in a circular letter dated January 20, 1863:

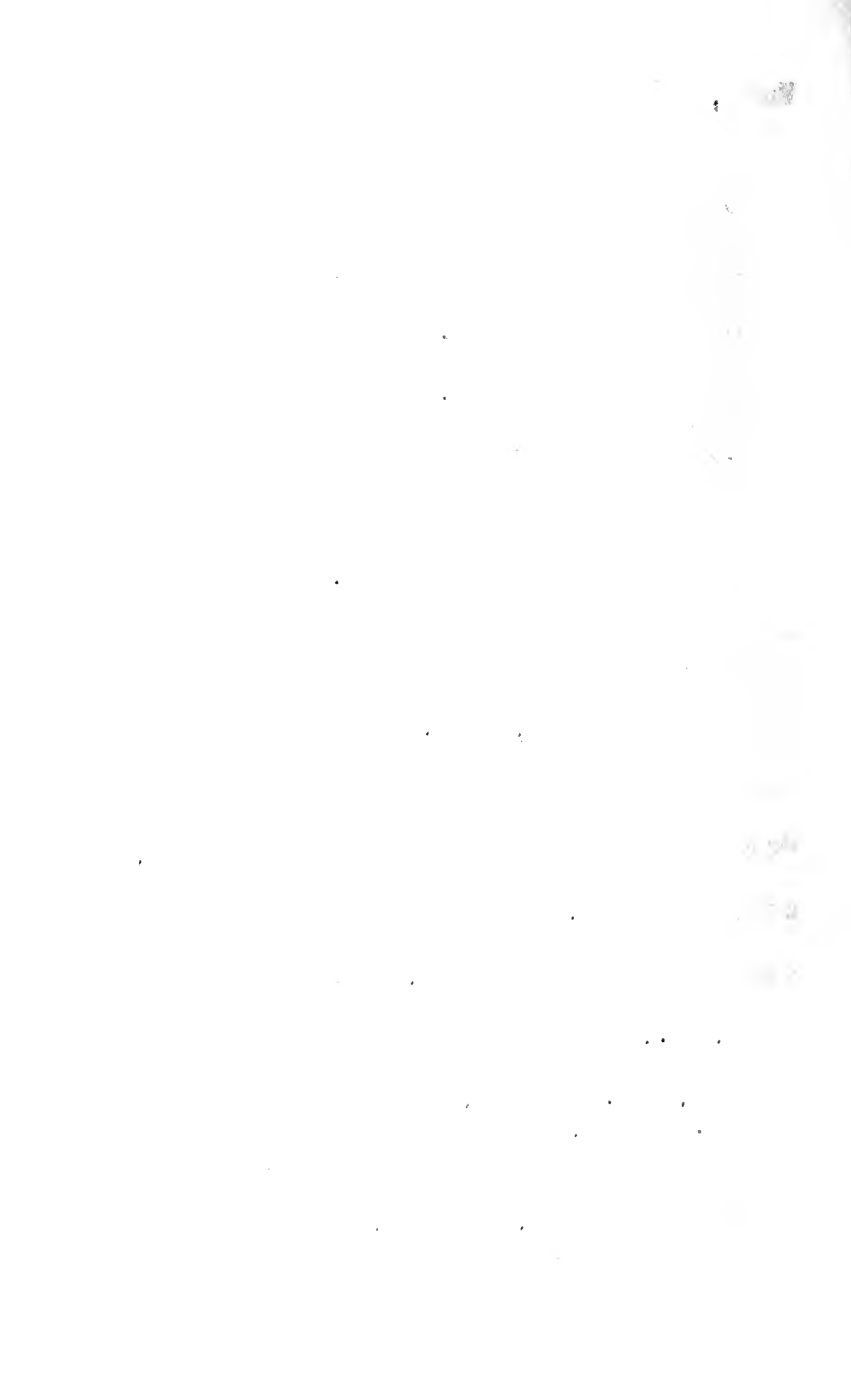
An eminent prelate, who has left among us lasting signs of his stay in the Diocese, frequently observed



that vows were lacking in our Constitutions and urged that this deficiency should be remedied without delay, if we wanted to assure the future of our Congregation. We gathered at Annonay to examine this important matter. At the outset none of us were prepared to take vows; nevertheless we came to a unanimous decision with such speed that it appeared certainly to be the work of the Holy Ghost.

Basilians took vows for the first time on September 24, 182. The formula of profession written at the front of the Record Book of the Toronto Novitiate, opened at St. Michael's College by Father Jean Soulerin in 1857, is:

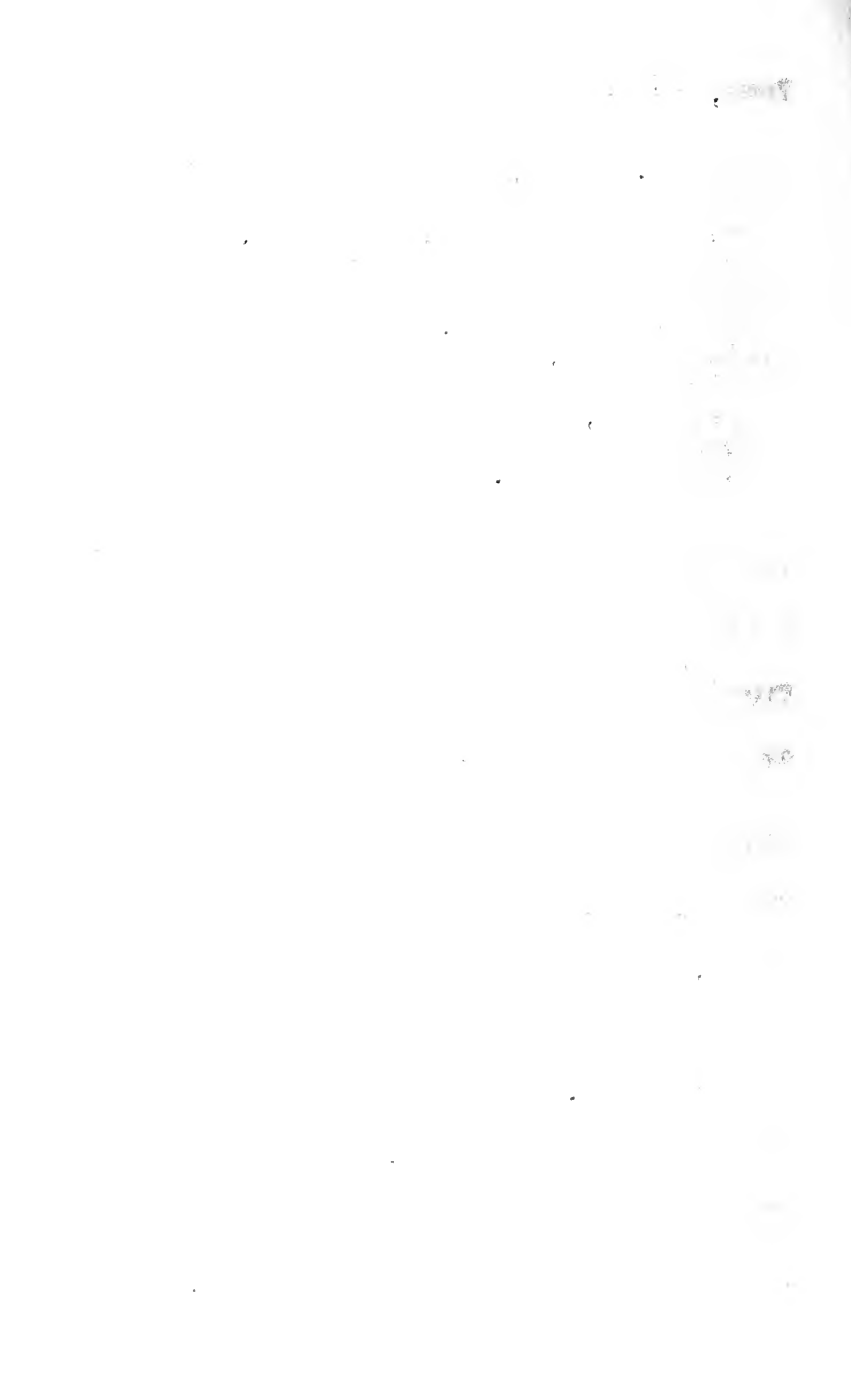
I, N., before the Most Blessed Mary ever Virgin and Mother of God, St. Joseph, our Holy Father St. Basil, the whole heavenly court and all here present, promise and vow unto the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to you Reverend Father General of the Society



of St. Basil, who stand in God's place for me, and to your successors Stability, Chastity, Obedience and Poverty: this last nevertheless in the sense that of all my income, no matter what its source, I can retain nothing without the permission of the Superior, except that of the preceding year as outlined in the Constitutions.

The inclusion of a Vow of Stability was a link with the past that raised the Promise of Stability made since 1822 to a higher status.

With the encouragement of his episcopal friend, Mgr. Guibert, now Archbishop of Tours, Father Actroie devoted his time to the internal organization of the Congregation. In 1860 he drew up a Rule for the Novitiate. Next he revised the Constitutions and presented them to the Holy See for approval. On



November 23, 1863, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars issued a decree which stated that the Holy Father, Pope Pius IX:

receiving the petition of the Superior General and having heard the commendatory letters of the Bishops concerned, approved and confirmed the aforesaid Pious Institute as a Congregation of simple vows.

The decree postponed the approbation of the Constitutions, partly because the Holy See was already studying a general revision of the Canon Law for Religious in preparation for the First Vatican Council. The formula of the vows expressly mentions a restriction on the vow of poverty. The approbation granted by Pius IX makes no mention of this. Father Julien Actorie died in 1864 and

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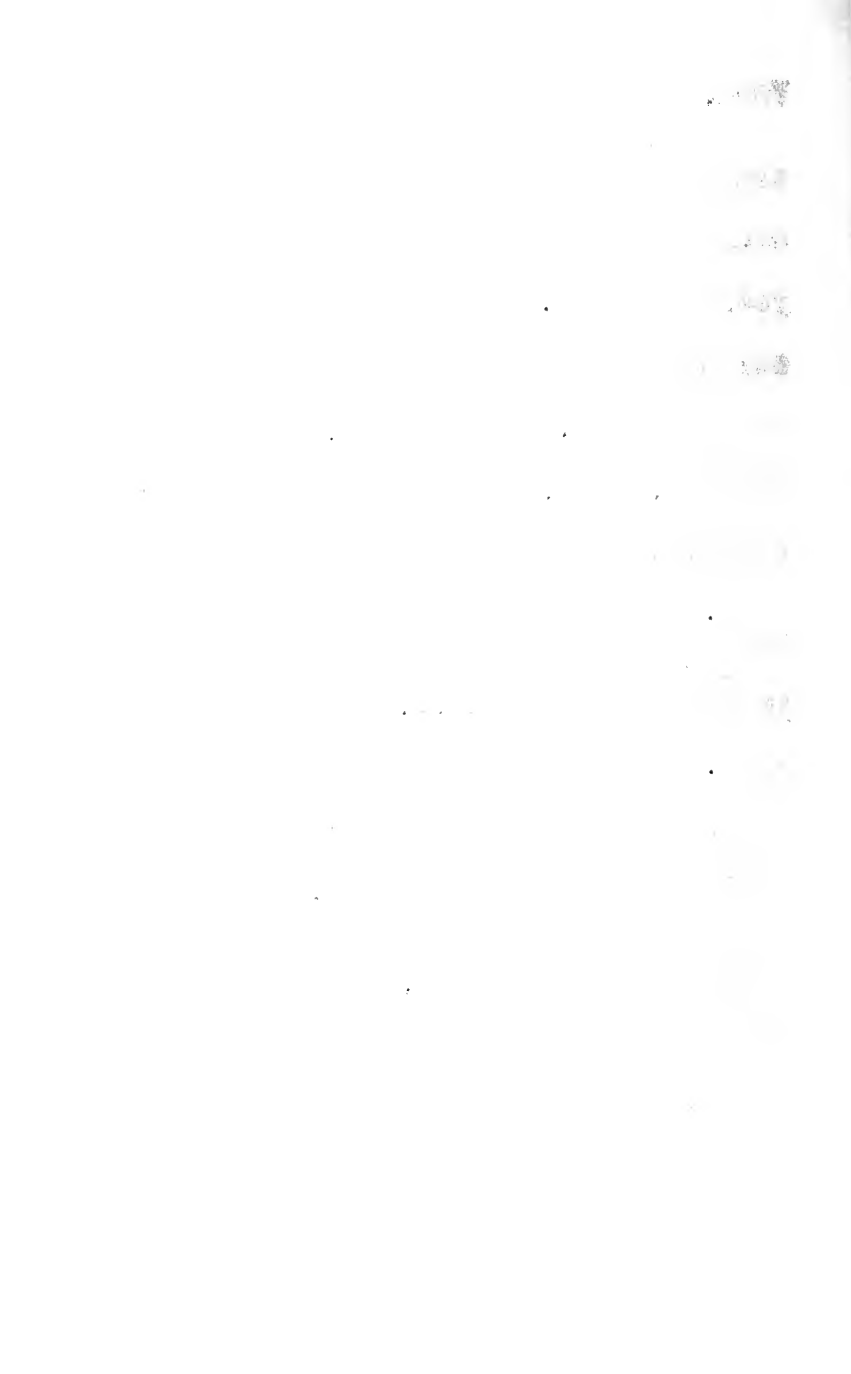
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the approbation of the Constitutions was to be a source of difficulty in years to come. Towards the end of 1895 the Constitutions were again submitted for approval. The answer, given on June 22, 1897, again postponed their approbation and suggested changes:

1. The articles on Poverty and the formula of profession are to be completely revised according to the norms...
2. All that is opposed to the common life is to be deleted from the Constitutions; and the obligation of the common life is to be clearly stated.

Father Adrien Fayolle, Superior General, and his Council considered that these and other suggestions contained in the answer of the Holy See involved too great a change and therefor they petitioned

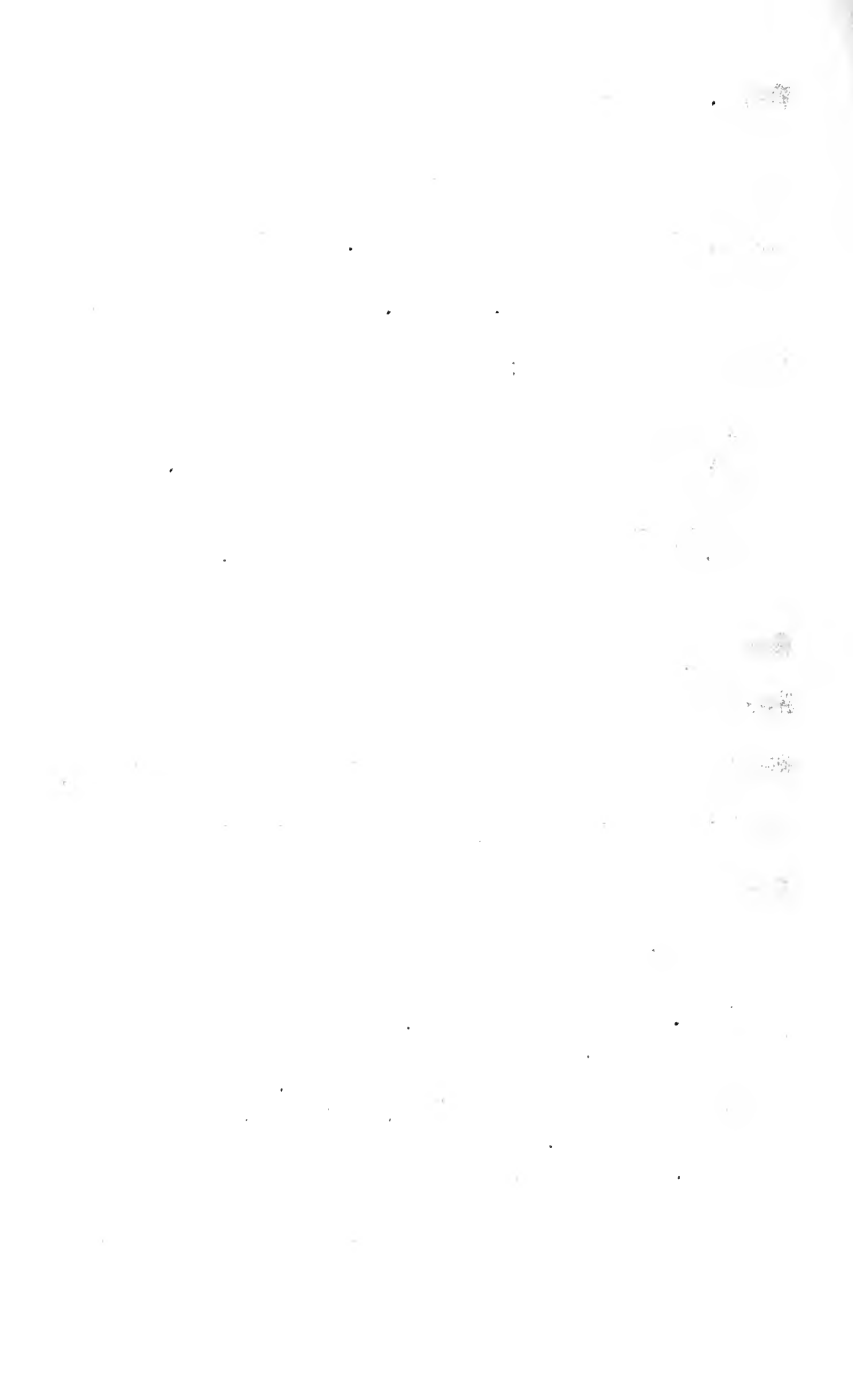


the Holy See for permission to keep the qualified vow of poverty. This was granted on May 4, 1898, but with a condition attached:

If the aforesaid priests wish to avail themselves of this indult, they will constitute only a Pious Sodality and not a true Congregation or Religious Institute.

How was poverty practiced in the Congregation under the qualified vow? The English translation of the constitutions, published in 1908, describe it in the 83rd article:

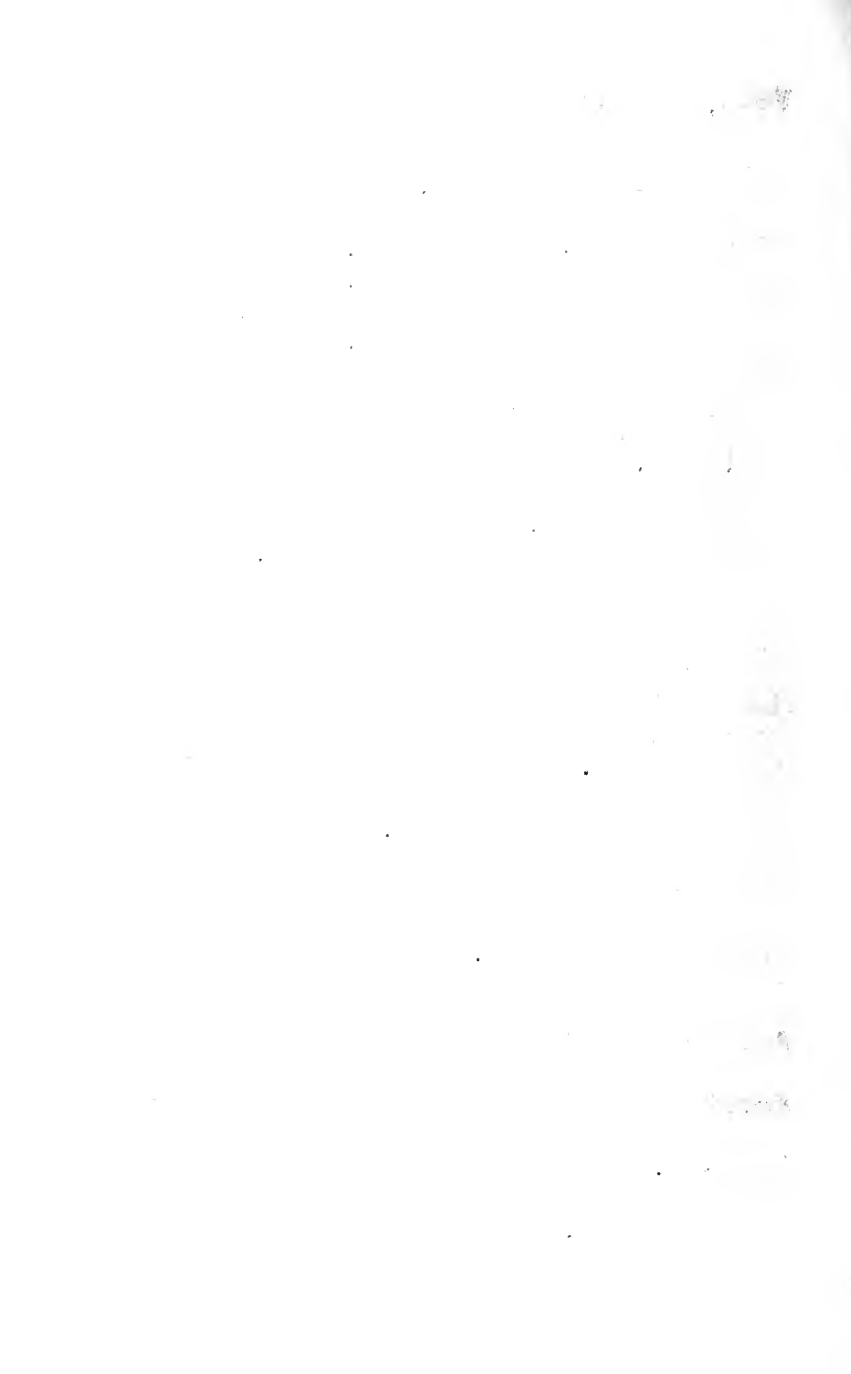
The members of the Society may be likened to the children of a family. The Superior, as the father, supplies, according to the means at hand, the needs of all, whether they be well or ill, or old, even to the end. Each individual member, however, provides at his own expense all articles of clothing and also his breviary, prayer books,



Bible, theologies, and a few other such things needless to enumerate. Wherefore, every member of the Society, after the first year of Novitiate, if he is not a priest, shall receive three hundred francs (\$80) a year, and, if he is a priest, two hundred francs (\$50); if his stipends for Masses are less than one hundred francs, he shall receive three hundred francs (\$80).

About this time the stipend for Low Masses in America was raised from 50 cents to \$1.00 giving priests an income of about \$400 annually. The provision for scholastics was raised to \$120 after World War I.

Father Francis Forster was elected Provincial for the Province of America in 1916. He was a student of Canon Law and a leader. When he was elected Super-



ior General in 1922 he guided the General Chapter in a thorough revision of the Constitutions, including the adoption of the simple vow of poverty without any restrictions in its practice. During the year 1922-1923 Father Forster was occupied giving to members the instruction on the vow of poverty now given to novices. On Thursday evening, June 27, 1923, during the priests' retreat at St. Michael's College, Father Forster took this vow publicly in the name of all who accepted it. Acceptance was signified by dropping in a box at the door of the chapel this declaration:

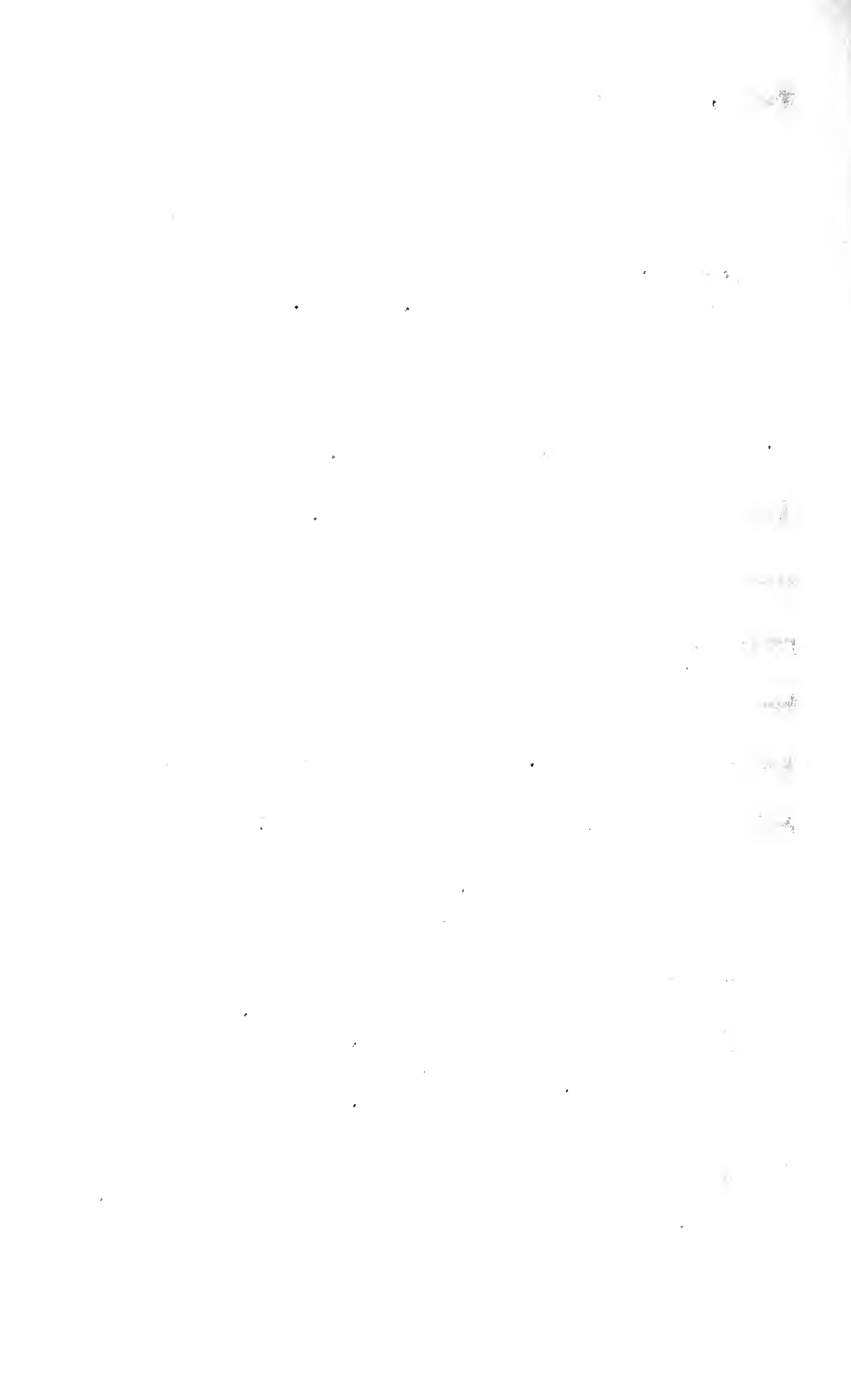
I, the undersigned member of the Congregation of Priests of St. Basil of Toronto, hereby accept the Vow of Poverty as expressed



in the Constitutions drafted by the Chapter held in August 1922, and as approved by the Sacred Congregation of Religious by the decree dated May 7, 1923.

Some did not wish to take this new vow and left the Congregation. Others hesitated before accepting it. Among these was Father Jan Aboulin who had been for many years Master of Novices and who was past the age when adaptation to change is easy. This is an extract from his letter of acceptance:

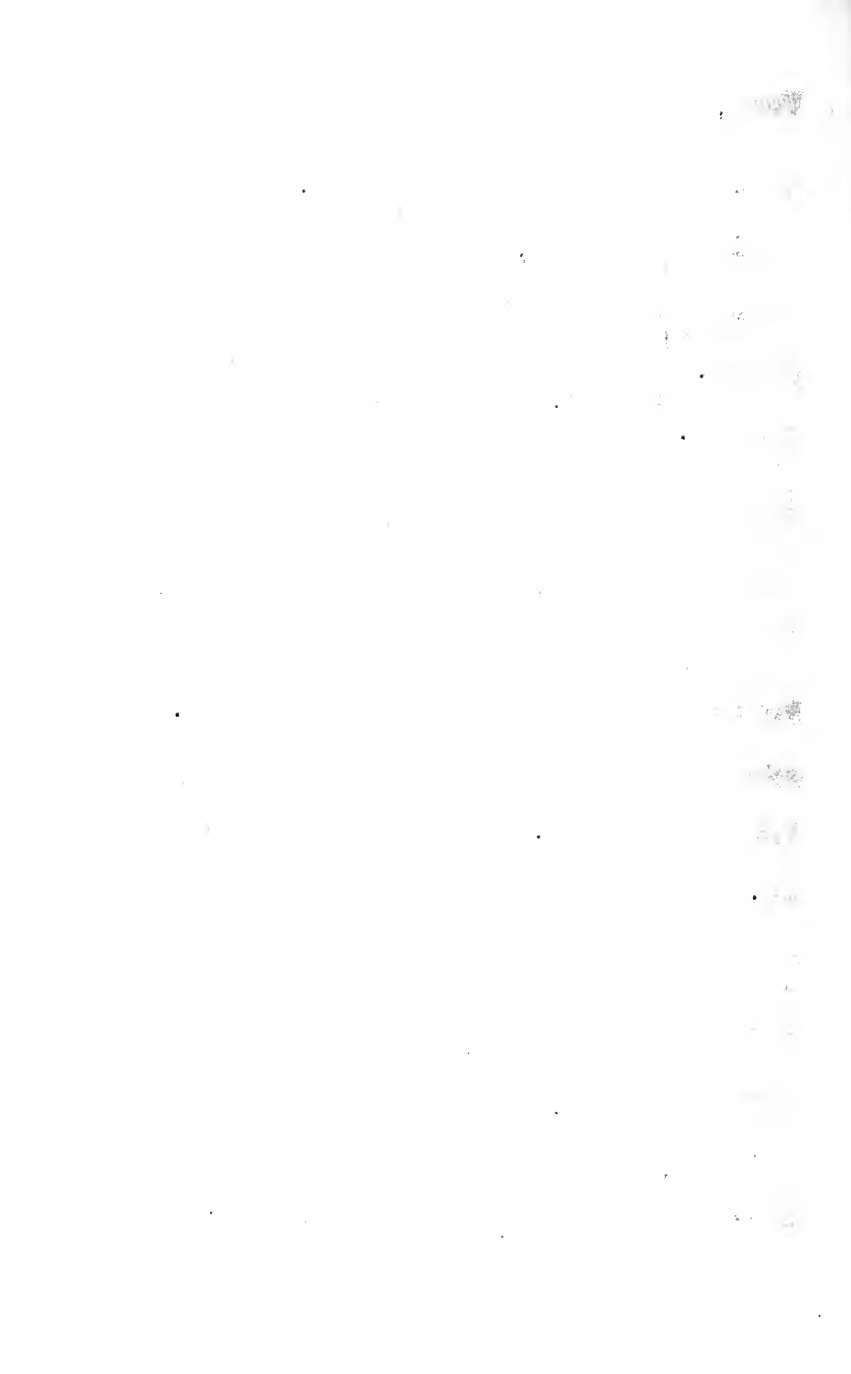
When I consider, what I did not realize at first, that by the fact of refusing to accept the vow I ceased altogether to be a Basilian and became simply a secular, even under a Basilian roof, I am ready for any sacrifice. I have been a Basilian for 60 years, and for those 60 years enjoyed the benefits of community life and the fraternal treatment of my confreres, besides a share in their prayers and the right to their Masses and



suffrages after my death. And now when I have already a foot in the grave, shall I despoil myself of those benefits and prove untrue to my religious family who was so good to me? No. At any cost I wish to die a Basilian. So may it please God.

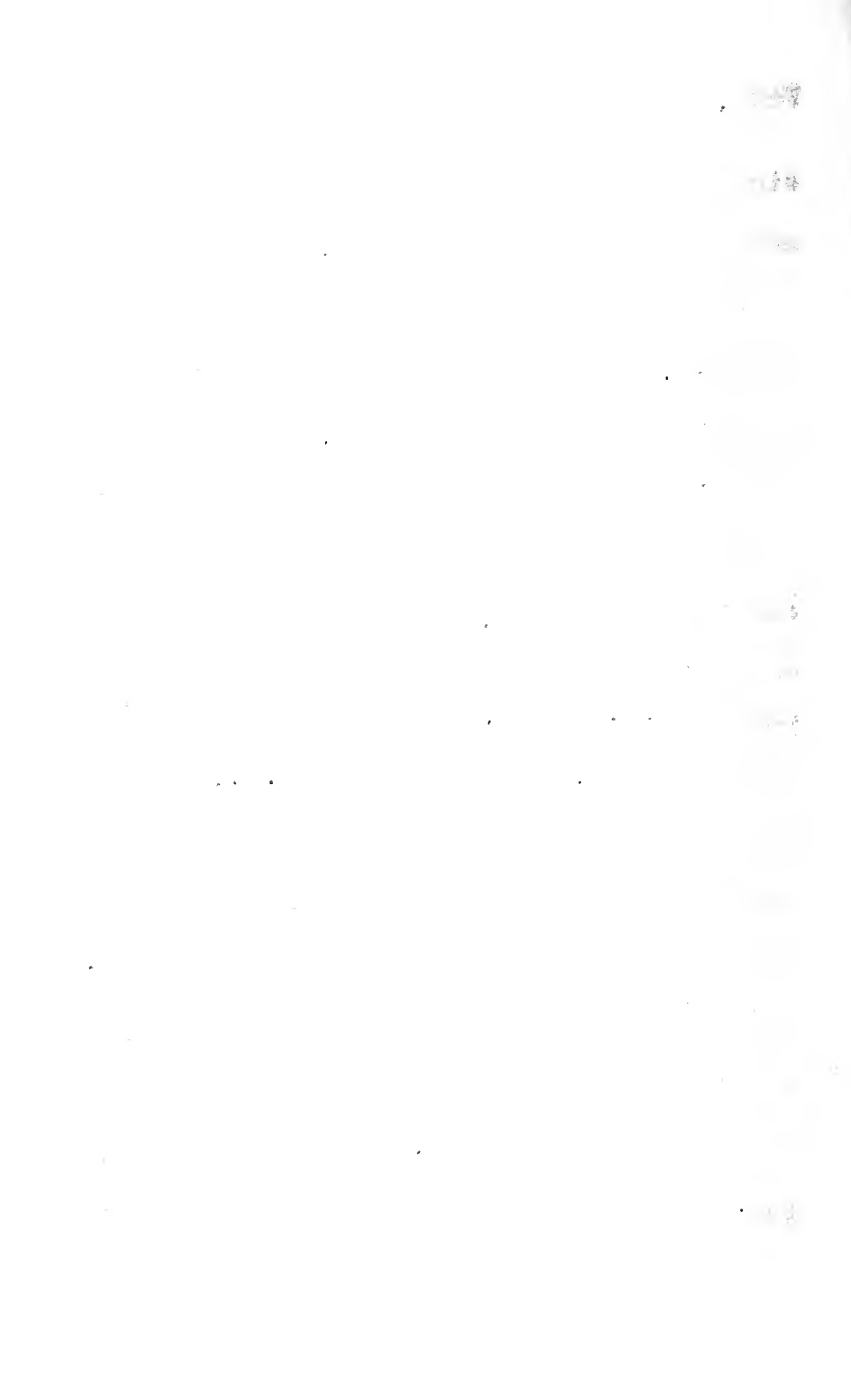
Changes will come in your own life, in your residence, in your employments, even changes in the Basilian way of life to which you have grown accustomed. Accepte them in the spirit shown by Father Aboulin. You will never regret it.

Concerning the more active role of initiating changes, do not look for quick results. Some communities move quickly, but God has left us to follow a different path. Father Pierre Tour-



vieille and other young confreres were eager to take vows in 1822, but they deferred to the wishes of the older priests. It was indeed God's Will that Basilians should take vows, and it was likewise His Plan that one hundred years would elapse before they would be taken in their fullness.

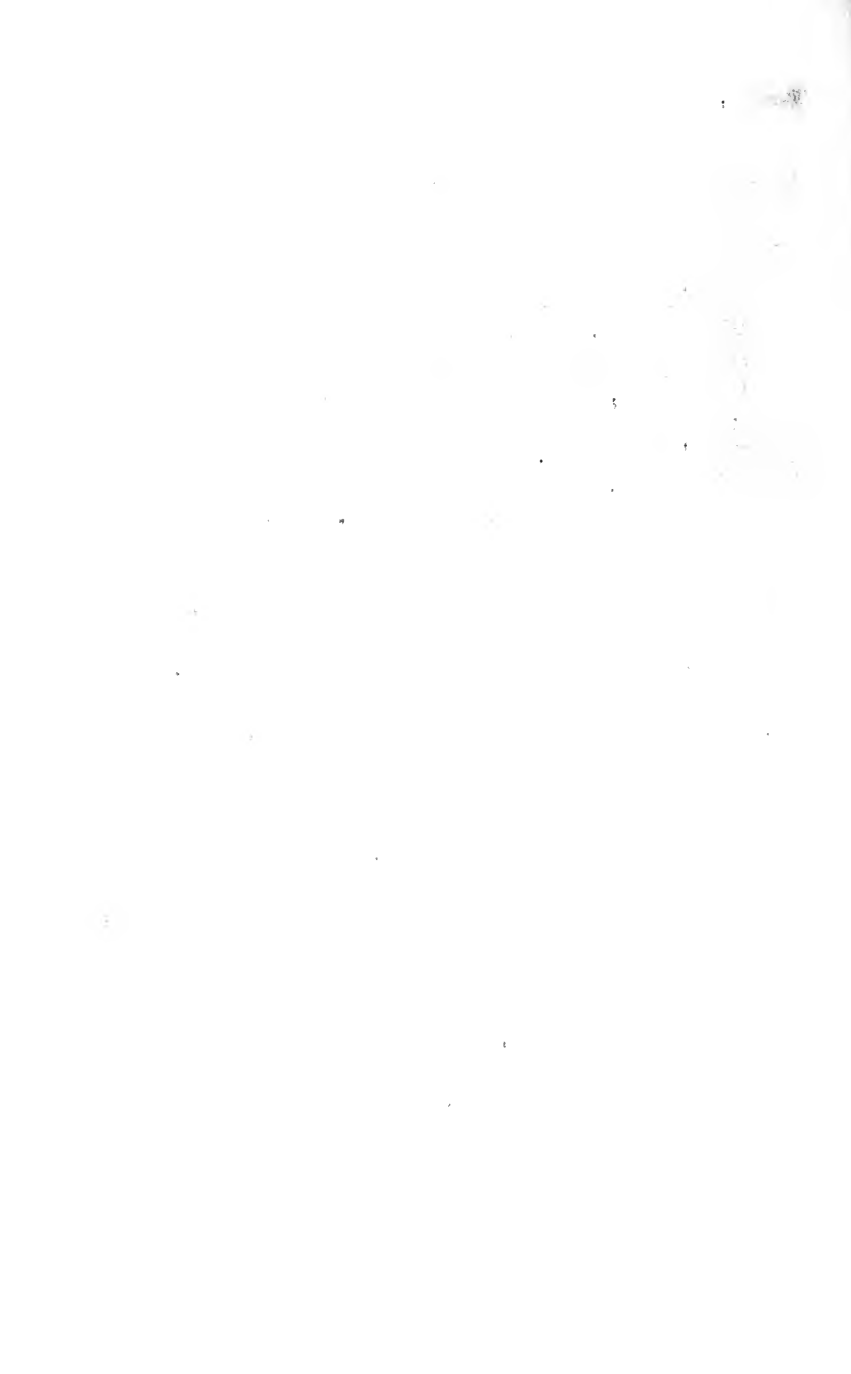
Father M.V. Kelly, no one called by his name Michael, he was always M.V., had a long life in the Congregation which was punctuated with strong support for and vehement opposition to various projects. Towards the end of his life he gathered up his reflections on Basilian life in a quasi-autobiography, Remarked In Passing. In it he wrote of those who real-



ized their ambitions, despite the position taken by those in authority:

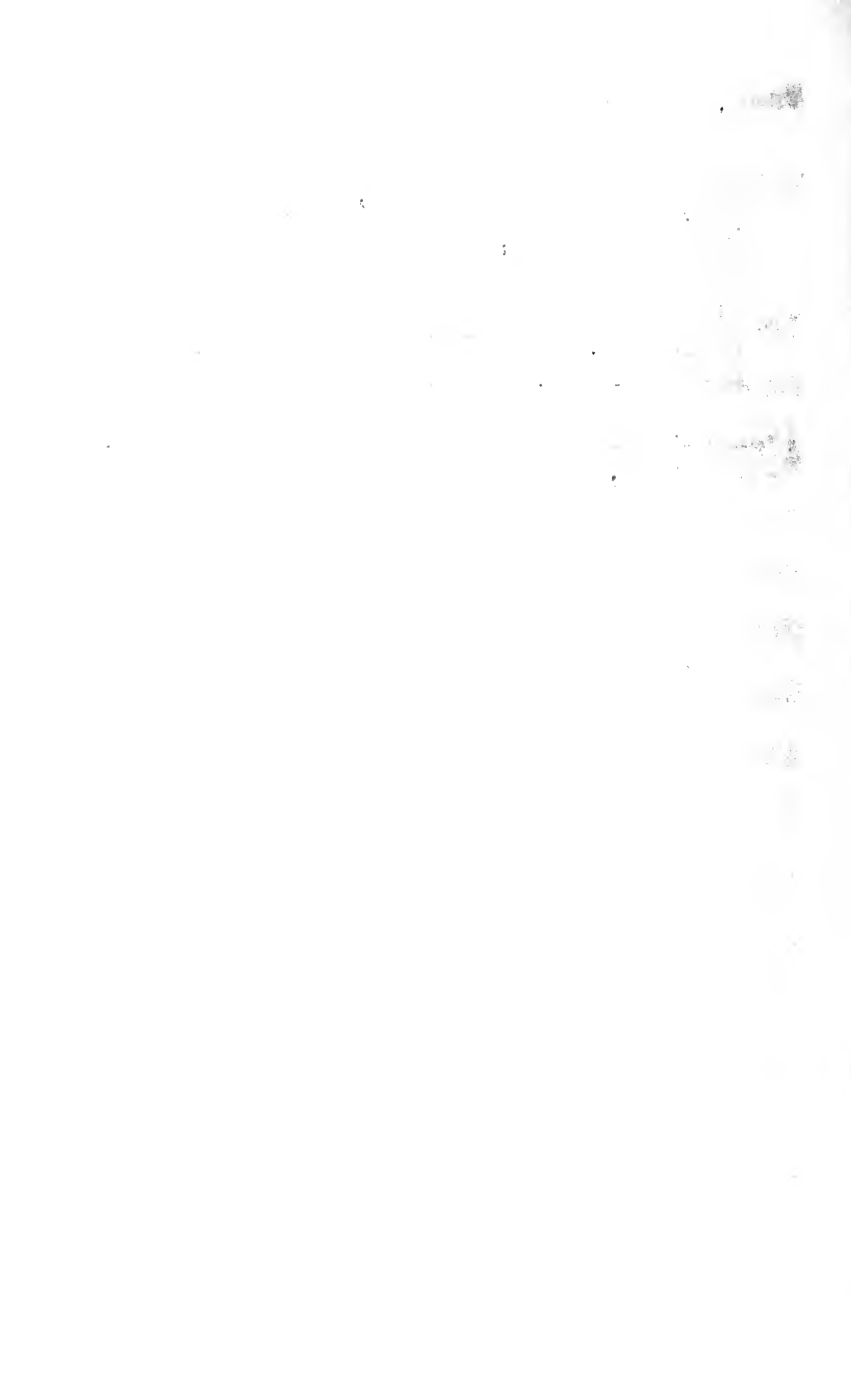
God's blessing had not been with the work. From the hour he had determined his purpose should prevail, no matter what, he had completely taken things out of God's hands, and God left him to himself. Under such circumstances failure was inevitable. p. 67

The Congregation of Priests of St. Basil is not a static organization. It has changed since I entered, and you will be saying the same thing at some time in the future. For your part in the development of the Congregation, whether it be the passive role of accepting change, or the active role of formulating changes, I commend to you the words of William Cobbett, author of a famous book on the Reformation:



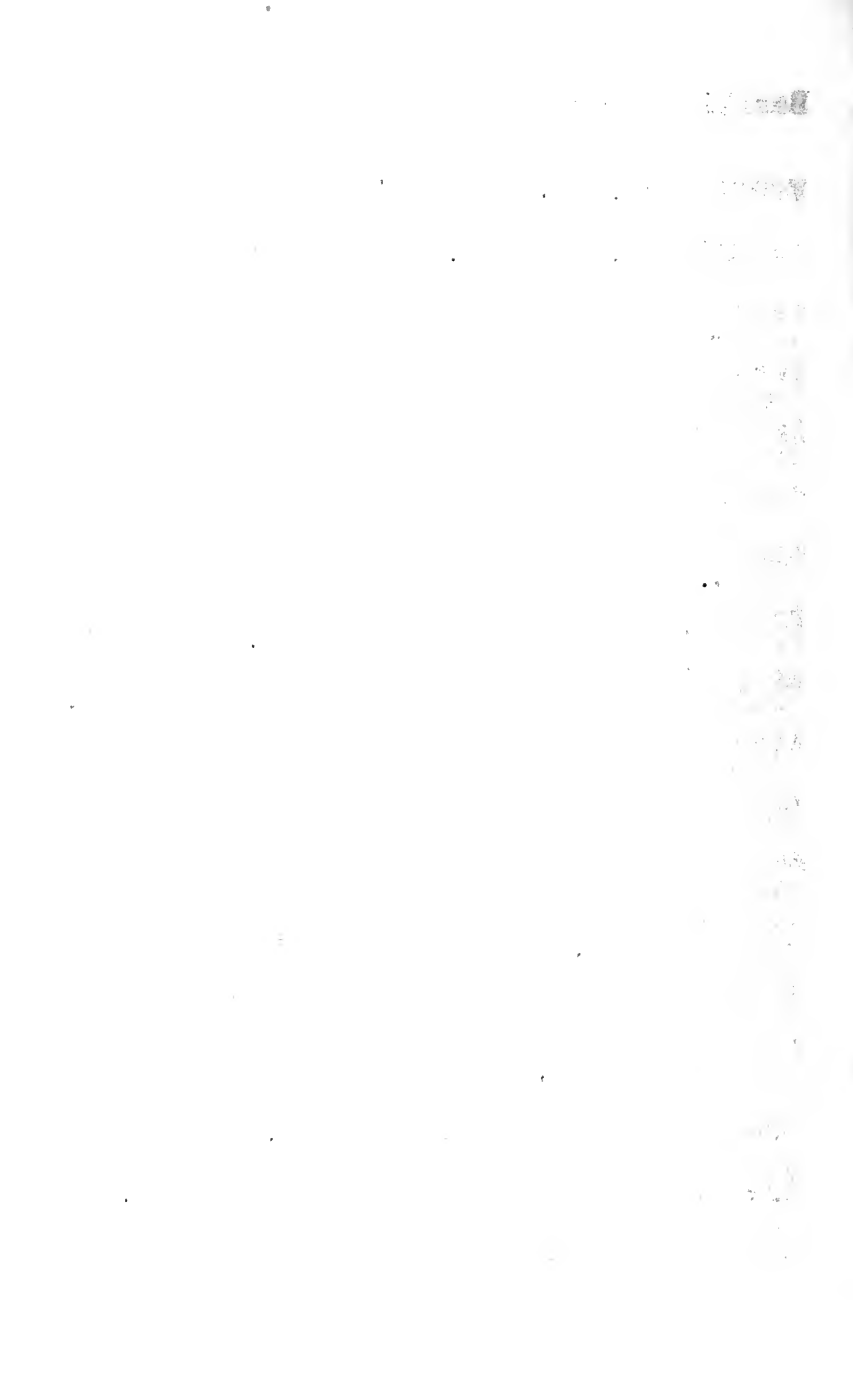
From a very early age, I had imbibed the opinion that it was every man's duty to do all that lay in his power to leave his country as good as he had found it. (Political Register, December 22, 1832)

(Conference given at Aquinas Institute, February 7, 1961)

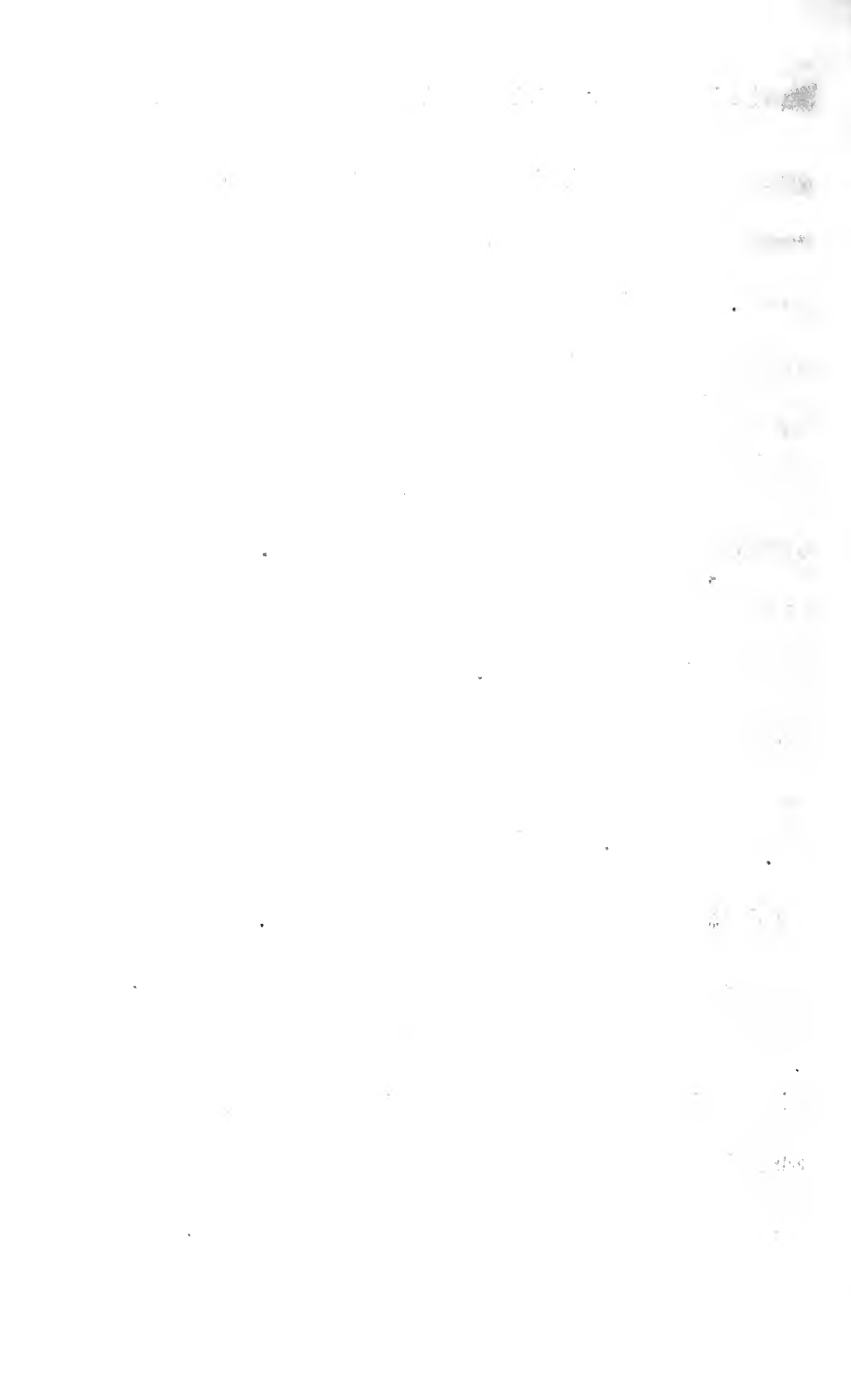


VISITATION, ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
SCHOOL, TORONTO, MARCH 1961

The Constitutions prescribe that the Superior General visit the entire Congregation either personally or through a delegate at least once every three years. It had been Father George Fahiff's intention to visit St. Michael's College School during the month of April. Although he is allowed three months from the date of his formal nomination as Archbishop of Winnipeg until his consecration, those months are intended primarily as a time of preparation for his new office, weeks in which he must procure an episcopal wardrobe, familiarize himself with episcopal ceremonies, study something of his new duties and



prepare by spiritual exercises for the reception of the fullness of Holy Orders. It is understood that a new bishop will wind up quickly the work he is then engaged upon and will hand over to others as much as possible of the tasks planned for those months. This Father Flahiff has done in the matter of your visitation. He would have liked to have come in person and as a sign of the importance he attaches to St. Michael's College School he has sent two priest to replace him. For all other houses he has sent only one. Father John Gaughan will conduct the financial part of the visitation, examining the books of the treasurer and the financial policy of the School. The



other parts of the visitation come within the scope of my own appointment.

The time of visitation is a time when confreres in a local house may make known their views and their difficulties so that the General Council may gain full knowledge of the work of the College, School or Parish. Last Fall I talked with Father William Roach about the work of Visitors. He told me that when Father Victorin Marijon was Provincial he would always begin his interview with the question, "Are you happy?" Recalling that his administration, both as Provincial and as Superior General, extended over years when the Congregation was deeply agitated by internal

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troubles, I asked, "Did any one ever answer: No, I am far from happy?" With unexpected vigor Father Roach replied: "Many's a time." This answer made little difference because uneasy conditions continued in the Congregation down until 1922.

In our own time many have asked what good comes from a visitation? I believe that it was Father Flahiff's practice to talk over matters with the Superior at the close of his visitation and without formulating regulations to make suggestions that were usually acted upon in view of the authority of the Superior General. My own practice is to draw up a list of observations re-

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ceived, then, omitting names, to go over these with the Superior. Many of the points raised are problems that he is aware of, but does not think it wise to do anything about them at the present time. Some are matters that have escaped his attention and changes will follow. In a few instances the problem turns out to be that one member has set an impossible standard and no action is called for.

The time of visitation is also a period when the views of the General Council can be made known in a more personal manner to members of local houses. Now there is one point on which Visitors were given instructions this year, namely

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to bring up the subject of vocations. The letter of the Superior General convening the annual Vocation Meeting and his letter asking for prayers for vocations during the novena before the feast of St. Joseph provide figures that emphasize the need for vocations. Therefore I shall not burden you with more statistics. Nor shall I attempt a discussion of the Theology of Religious Vocation, that field being expertly handled by Father "Dan" Corrigan. Instead I would like to begin with an observation once made by Father Henry Carr during a discussion on vocations. He remarked that formerly Basilian vocations were obtained through a system

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of apprenticeship. He lamented the passing of this practice saying that something very useful had been lost. It will be the purpose of tonight's conference to trace something of the history of this approach to the problem of recruiting new members, to see if some of its claimed advantages can be applied to our present situation.

The apprenticeship system goes back a long way in our traditions. When Father Joseph Lapierre began to teach boys in his rectory school at St. Symphorien-de-Mahun, he enlisted the services of others. Some of his recruits were priests, but the majority were aspirants to the priesthood. The recommendation given by a pastor to one of Father

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Lapierre's early students advised: "He is a singer and if need be can teach singing." The bearer of this recommendation was Father Augustin Payan who was put to work and who later became one of our founders. When Pierre Tourvieille came to Annonay in 1802 to study Theology, he was made recreation master, then dormitory master and study hall master. In 1804 he was given a class in mathematics to teach in in the following year he was ordained. Liking what he had experienced as a student, he joined the college staff. As second Superior General he wrote in 1855:

For fifty years I have followed all the phases of this establishment ... there is not a function connected with the education of youth that I have not exercised.

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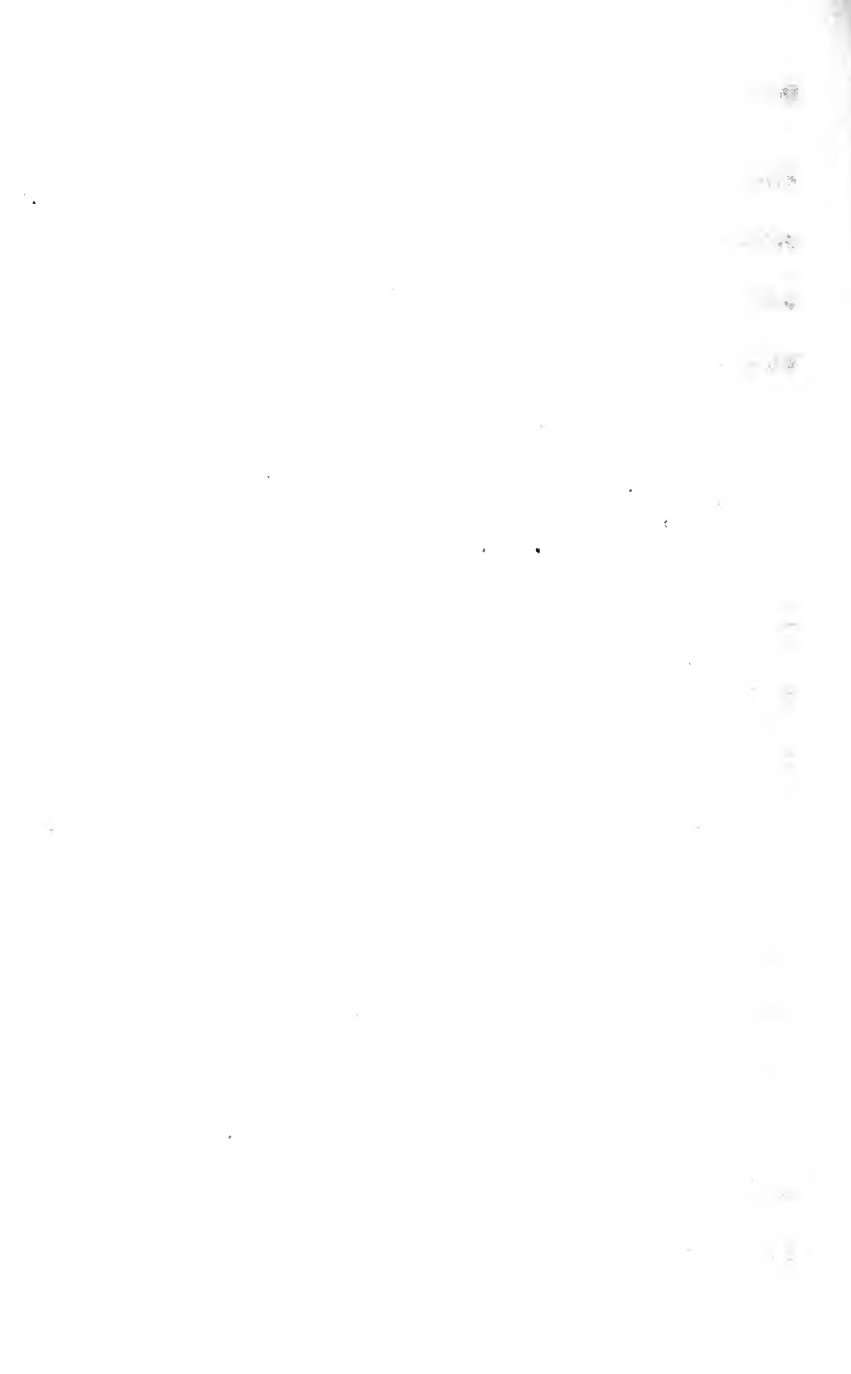
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The Constitutions printed in 1878 by order of Father Jean Soulerin embodied the principle of apprenticeship in the training of scholastics:

In order never to separate practice from Knowledge, some light duties, occupying but little time, will be given to the scholastics, (p. 24)

The system of apprenticeship was ideally suited to a boarding school that offered a course extending over six or eight years. To fill out the number of teachers, recreation masters, etc., a promising student would be invited to join the staff as a junior member, or perhaps an ecclesiastical student from another college would come and help out. Seminaries were few in the earlier days of the Province of Ontario and Bishops were



not averse to making exceptions and instead of requiring young men to attend the Grand Seminaries of a French Canadian Diocese, permitted them to make a course in Philosophy and even in Theology at St. Michael's College or at Assumption College. The list of staff in a prospectus of St. Michael's College printed in 1862 shows not only Basilian priests and scholastics, but also two ecclesiastical students, one of whom later became Bishop of Hamilton.

In my own first years as a day student at St. Michael's College School, I can recall lay teachers who wore a soutane: Joe Mahon, now a Toronto lawyer; Leo Troy, now a member of the Provincial Legislature; Vincent McIntyre, now Prin-

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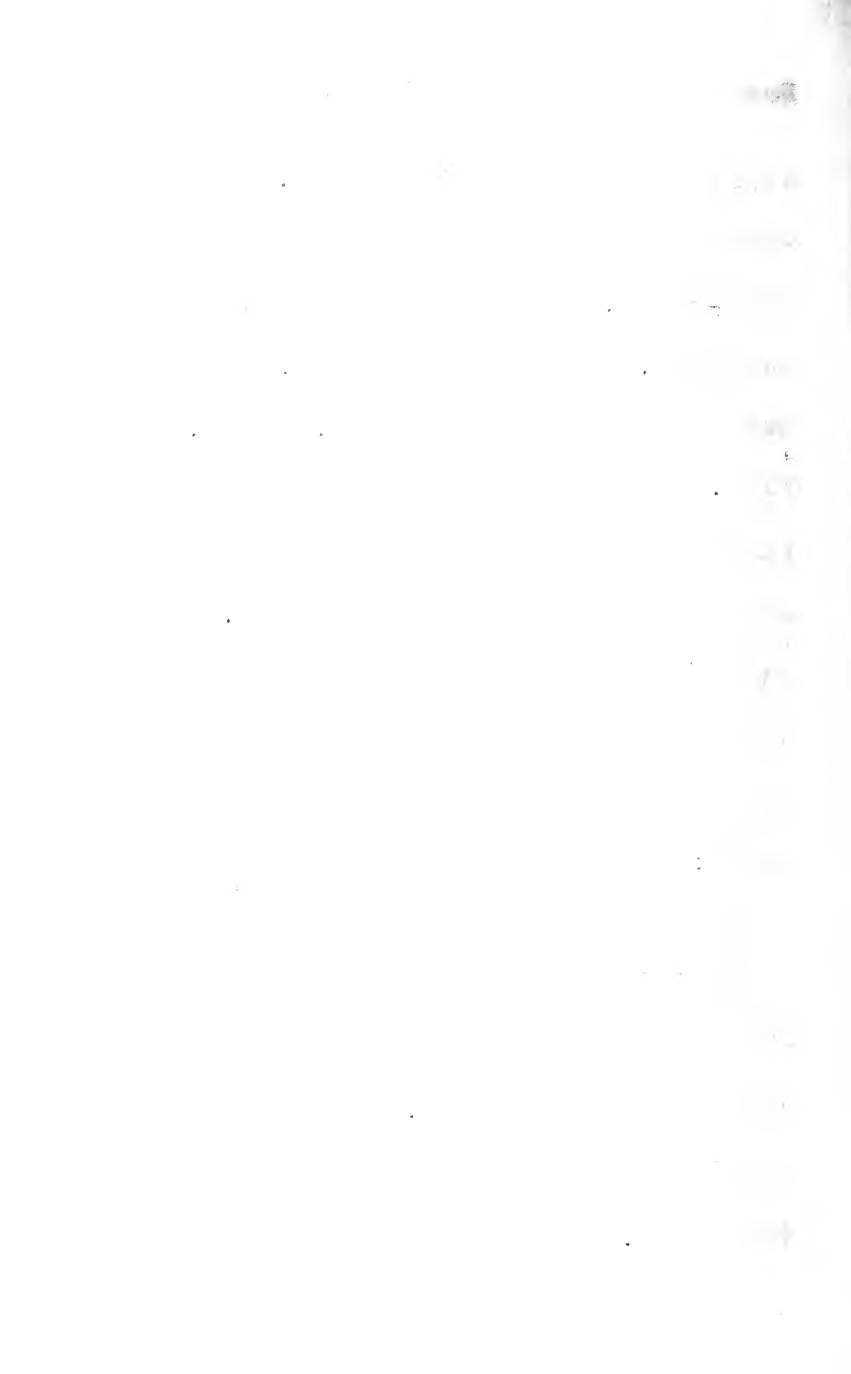
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cipal of a Teachers' College. There were others who became priests: Lester Pettypiece, now chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital, London; Joseph May, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Utica, New York. My memory does not recall any layman who wore the soutane as a teacher and who later became a Basilian. The General Chapter of 1922 recognized that the era of apprenticeship was drawing to a close because the question was asked:

At what age should candidates be encouraged to go on to the Novitiate?

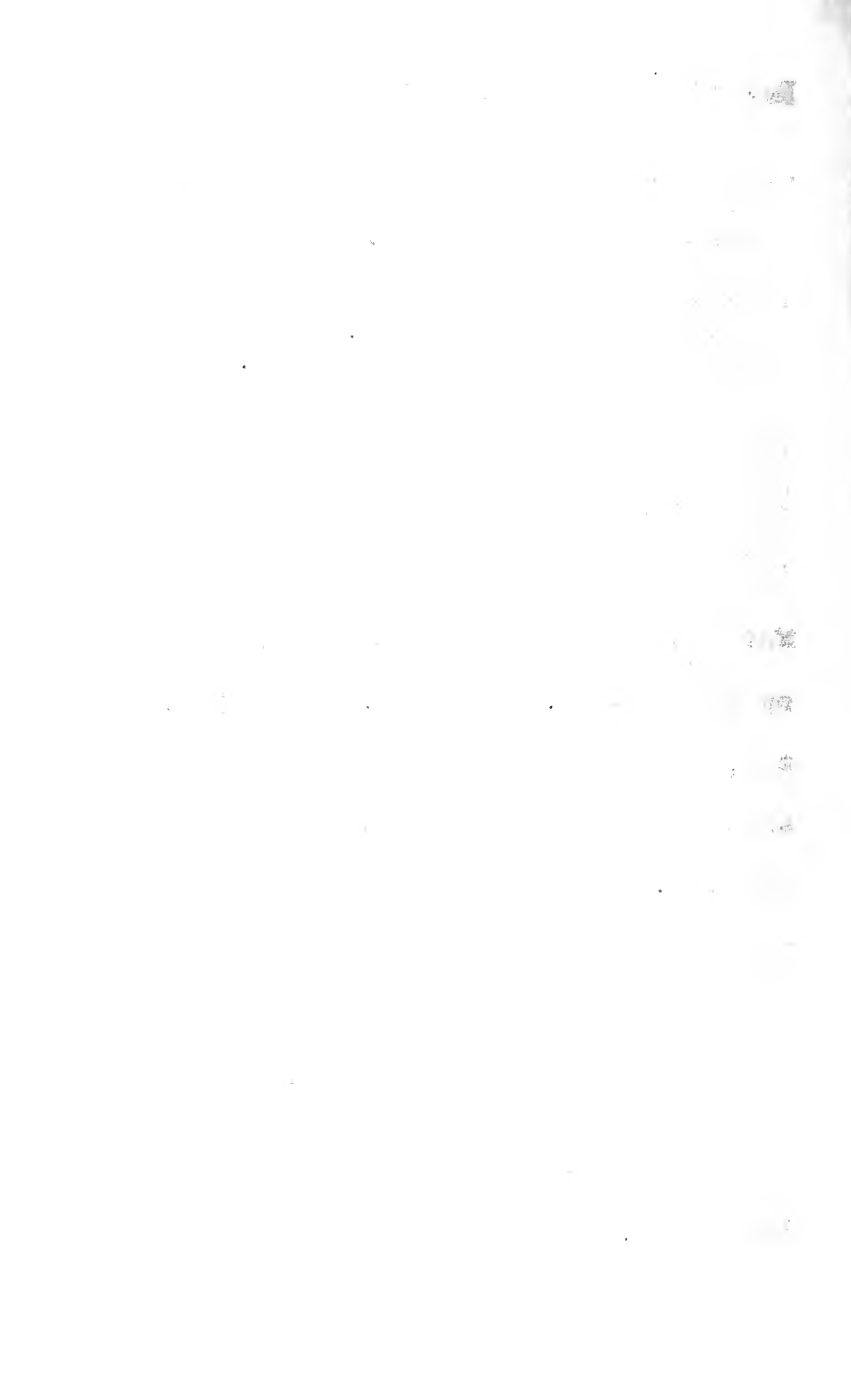
The practice had been to suggest graduation from university, or at least a partial arts course before going to the Novitiate. Father Francis Forster pointed out that:



The Codex allows entrance at the age of fifteen, and he expressed the opinion that in view of our need of subjects, we would do well to encourage them to enter even at matriculation. This view was generally accepted.

It may be noted here that the apprenticeship method of testing a vocation is suited to an academic atmosphere where the examinations are set and marked by the school. It was the necessity of competing in provincial examinations that reconciled Father Carr to its passing.

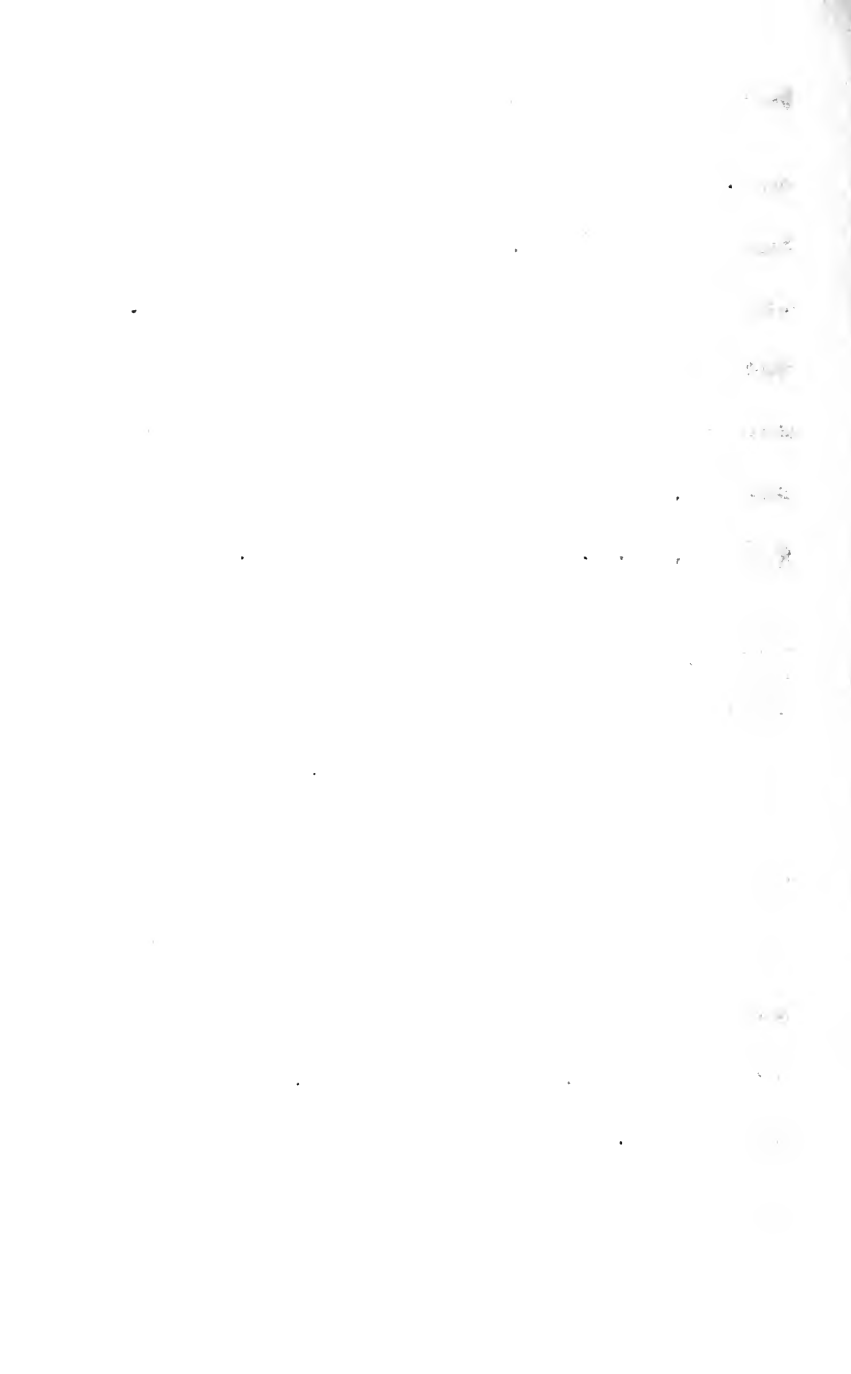
Among us the benefits of this system were real. Young men got used to wearing a soutane and to appearing before others in it. This in itself was not important, but an intangible benefit



was. It gave the young man an ecclesiastical spirit, or showed clearly that he was not likely to develop it. Each one here present knows of boys who have the external signs of a vocation, but who lack an ecclesiastical spirit, i.e. a divine vocation.

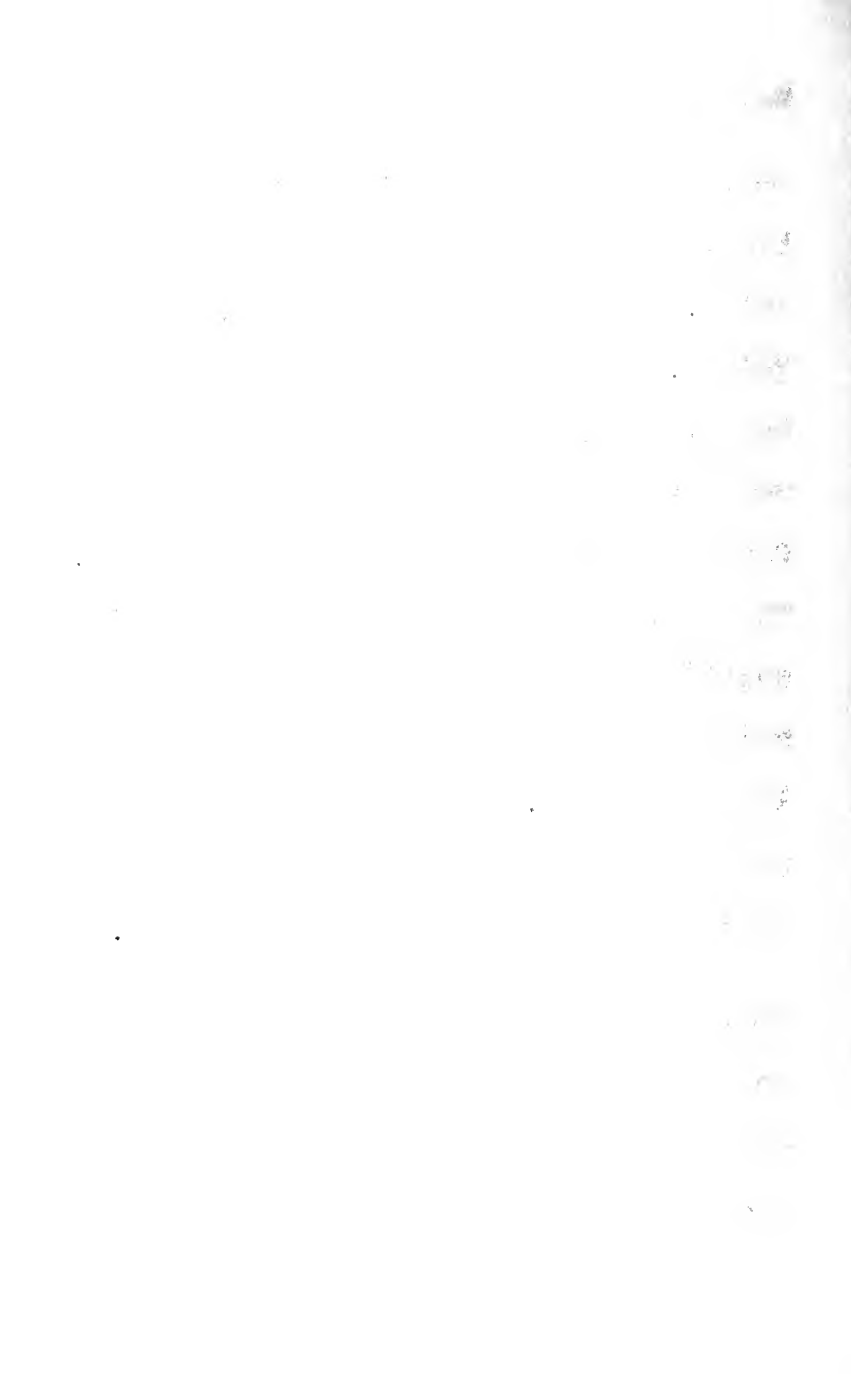
Masters of Novices do not like to receive young men who have been advised to go and try out the life. The period of apprenticeship gave the opportunity to try out the life and one or two years experience helped many former Basilian students to make up their mind for the Congregation, for a Diocese, or for the lay state.

The apprenticeship system brought the



prospective candidate into close contact with the members of the Congregation. If he liked what he saw, he joined. If he was not fitted for community life, he learned that early and went to a diocese or to some calling for which he was temperamentally fitted. The heavy losses that have been experienced among scholastics and novices in recent years are not due entirely to larger numbers. They are due in some part to lack of previous experience of what life as a Basilian would be like.

Must the advantages of our earlier system of apprenticeship be completely lost because the conditions in our schools have changed? This question is pertin-



ent at a time when Dioceses and Communities are introducing Seminary Days, Vocation Workshops, etc., that give prospective candidates an opportunity of studying and living their future life for a few hours or several days. I suggest that some effort must be made to recapture certain features of apprenticeship. It is not a question of doing something for prospective candidates, it is one of getting them to do something for us. Father Francis Grescoviak would ask that teachers require a prospective candidate to do something the teacher's way. His experience with novices has been that those who insist on doing things their own way do not persevere. If they get by the Novitiate,

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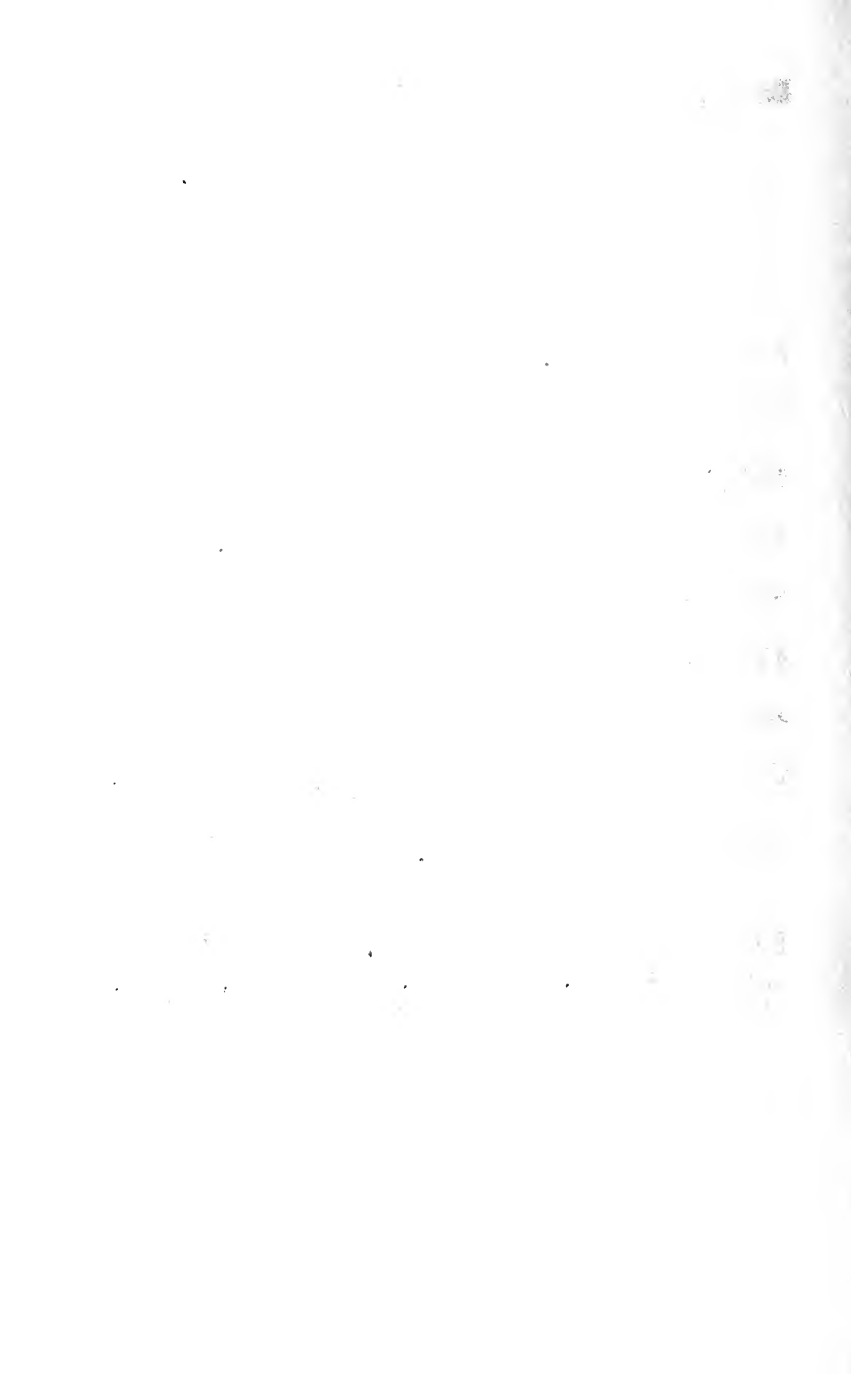
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they fall by the wayside as scholastics. I can recall some of our older priests telling how an individual who was thinking of joining us was discouraged for this very reason. It was discovered as study hall master, etc., that he had his way of doing things and would not listen to advice.

School activities bring teachers and students together, but too frequently the relationship is one of the teacher giving something extra. Vocations flourish when it is the student who contributes. The Sodality of the B.V.M. has apostolic committees that enable members to do something extra. At Catholic Central High School, Detroit, some

students serve Mass in the chapel. The actual techniques used will have to be worked out in each school and even by each confrere. It will have to be done prudently lest a type of boy who lacks initiative and who likes to hang around priests become a local nuisance. One reason why this having students around is unpopular is because some confreres do not like to be constantly living up to the ideals set by students for their priests and teachers.

(Conference given at St. Michael's College School, Toronto, March 24, 1961, at the opening of a canonical visitation)

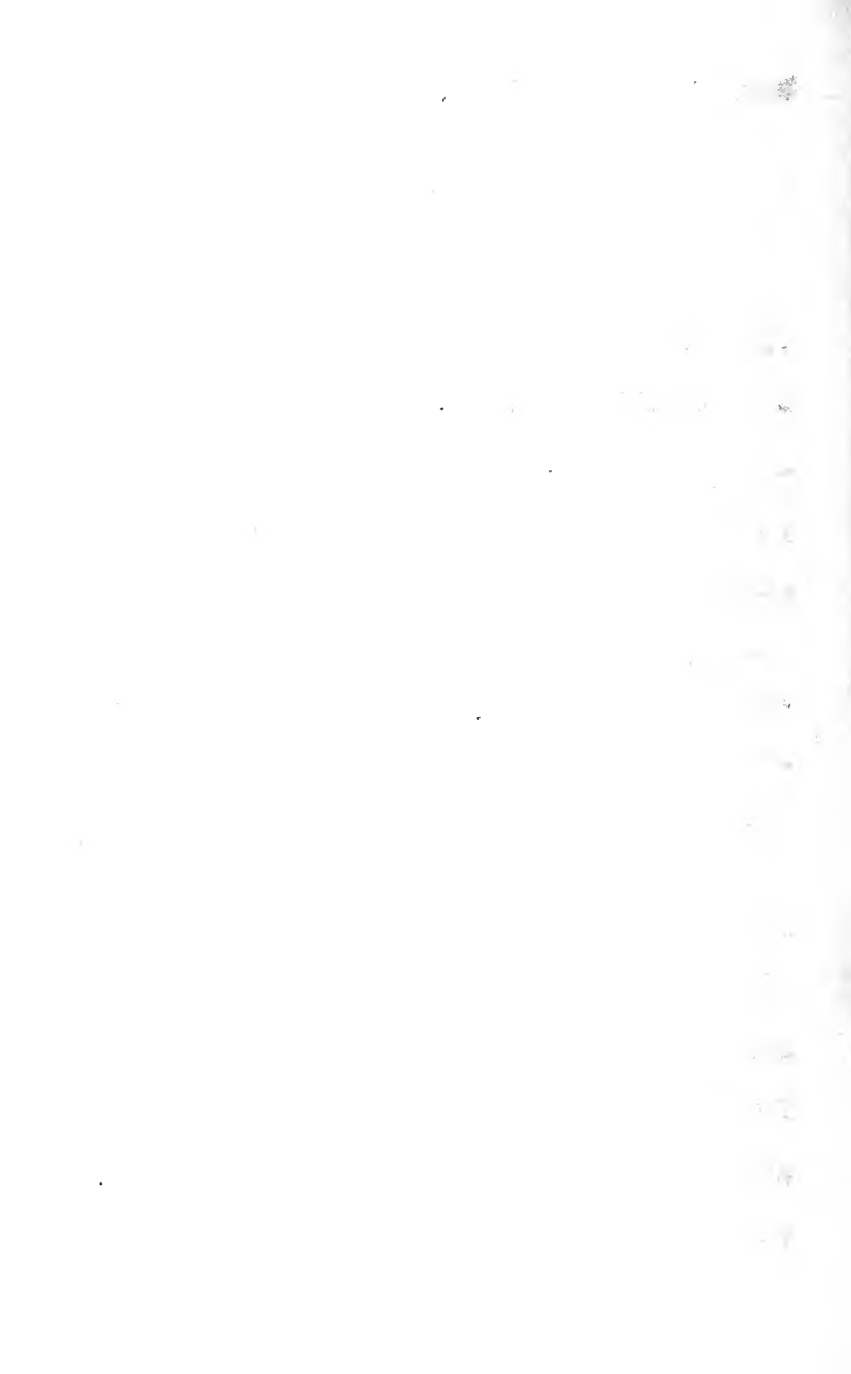


THE BASILIAN APOSTOLATE

1822-1922

The purpose of this paper is to describe the Basilian apostolate between the years 1822 and 1922. During these one hundred years the general aim of the Congregation was the sanctification of its members and the specific aims were teaching and preaching. In 1913 a change in the Constitutions restricted the specific work to the apostolate of education.

In France during this period the apostolate of education was exercised on a community basis while the work of preaching was largely left to individual zeal and was exercised on a part-time basis. In America the need was both for teachers



and for priests to serve in parishes with the result that the apostolate of teaching and that of preaching were alike exercised on a community basis. In addition confreres devoted themselves to preaching on a part-time basis out of zeal or out of the necessity of bolstering community finances.

Tables I and II show how the primitive Basilian apostolates were exercised in France and in America during 1822-1922. Father Charles Roume supplied the information for the Province of France some years ago in response to one of my frequent requests for information. The dates chosen by him are key dates in Basilian history: 1837, Decree of Praise; 1863, Decree of Approbation; 1878, first

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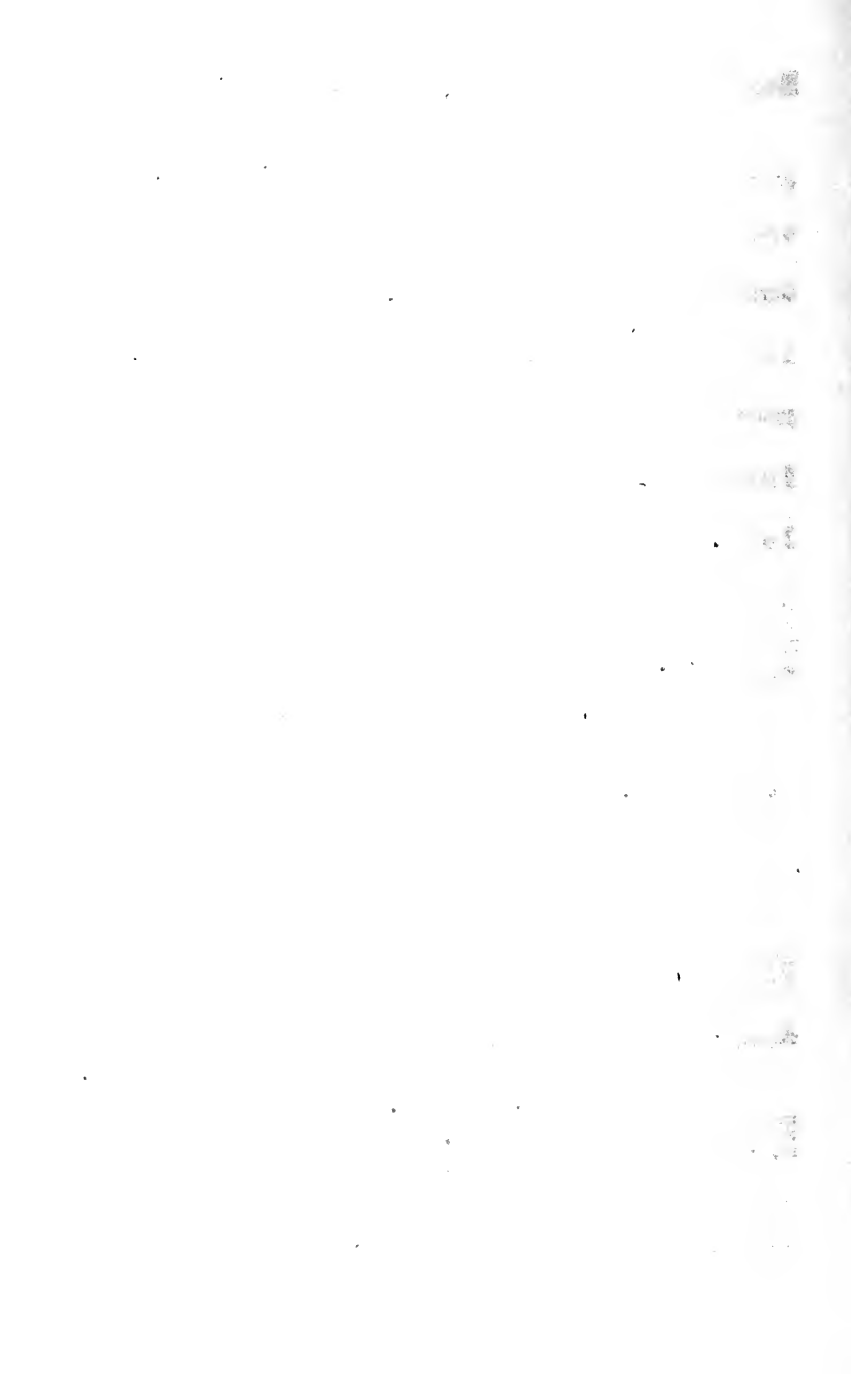
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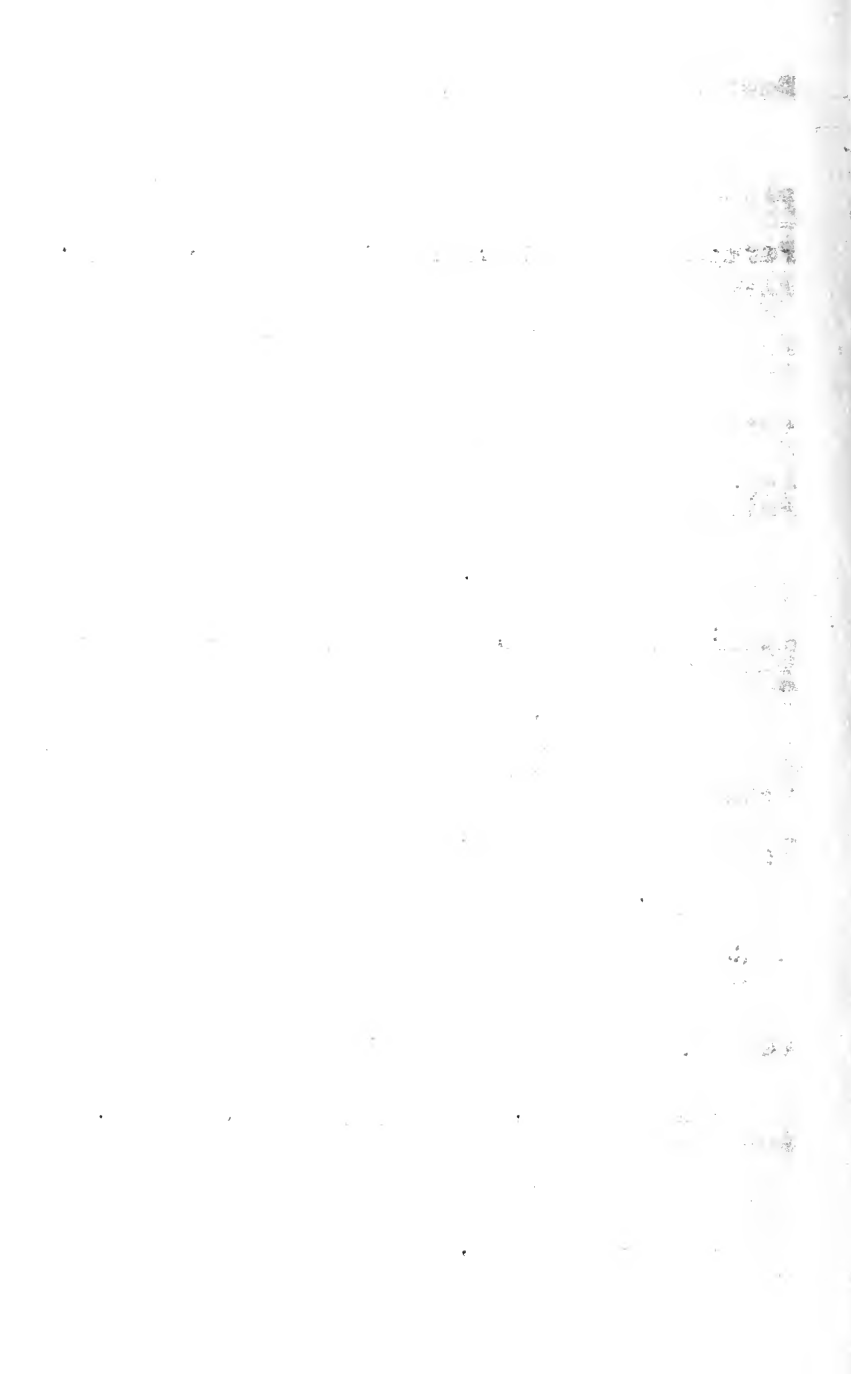
printing of the Constitutions; 1890, the high point in the growth of the Congregation in France. The dispersal imposed by an anti-clerical law in 1903 made impossible a list of members by institutions for the years 1903 and 1922. The list for the Province of Canada has been compiled from various sources. Only for the year 1921-1922 was an official list of appointments available.

TABLE I — PROVINCE OF FRANCE

| Place | Institution | Basilians | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------|
| | | Priests | Others |
| <u>1837: 17 priests, 6 postulants</u> | | | |
| Annonay | College (1800) | 9 | 3 post. |
| | Ste. Barbe, 1819 | > | |
| Feyzin | College, 1827-47 | 3 | |
| Privas | College, 1828 | 5 | 3 " |



| Place | Institution | Basilians | |
|---|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Priests | Others |
| <u>1863: 41 priests, 26 scholastics, 6 nov.</u> | | | |
| Annonay | College | 13 | 8 schol. |
| | Ste. Barbe | 3 | 1 " |
| | Scholasticate (1862) | 2 | |
| Aubenas | Petit-Séminaire (1852) | 8 | 5 schol. |
| Feyzin | Novitiate (1860) | 3 | 6 novices |
| Privas | College | 7 | 7 schol. |
| Vernoux | Petit-Séminaire (1844) | 5 | 5 " |
| <u>1878: 89 priests, 10 scholastics, 7 nov.</u> | | | |
| Annonay | College | 20 | |
| | Ste. Barbe | 9 | |
| | Scholasticate | | 10 schol. |
| | Novitiate | | 7 novices |
| Aubenas | Petit-Séminaire | 12 | |
| Blidah (Algeria) | College, 1868 | 10 | |
| Bourg St. Andéol | Petit-Séminaire (1871) | 12 | |
| Chateauroux | College | 3 | |
| Perigueux | Petit-Séminaire (1866) | 12 | |
| Vernoux | Petit-Séminaire | 11 | |
| <u>1890: 95 priests, 11 scholastics, 7 nov.</u> | | | |
| Annonay | College | 30 | |
| | Ste. Barbe | 6 | 7 novices |
| Blidah | College | 15 | |
| Bône, Alg. | College, 1888 | 6 | |
| Cadouin | Parish | 2 | |



| Place | Institution | Basilians | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Priests | Others |
| Perigueux | Petit-Séminaire | 12 | 11 schol. |
| Plymouth, England | College, 1884 | 6 | |
| Prades | Parish | 3 | |
| Vernoux | Petit-Séminaire | 12 | |

1903: 85 members

1922: 54 members

TABLE II, PROVINCE OF CANADA

1852: 3 priest, 2 scholastics

| | | | |
|---------|--------------------|---|----------|
| Toronto | St. Michael's Col. | 3 | 2 schol. |
|---------|--------------------|---|----------|

1863: 7 priests, 1 scholastic

| | | | |
|------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Owen Sound | St. Mary's Parish | 2 | |
| | (1863) | | |

| | | | |
|---------|--------------------|---|----------|
| Toronto | St. Michael's Col. | 5 | 1 schol. |
| | (1852) | | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--|
| | St. Basil's Parish | | |
| | (1856) | | |

Novitiate, 1856

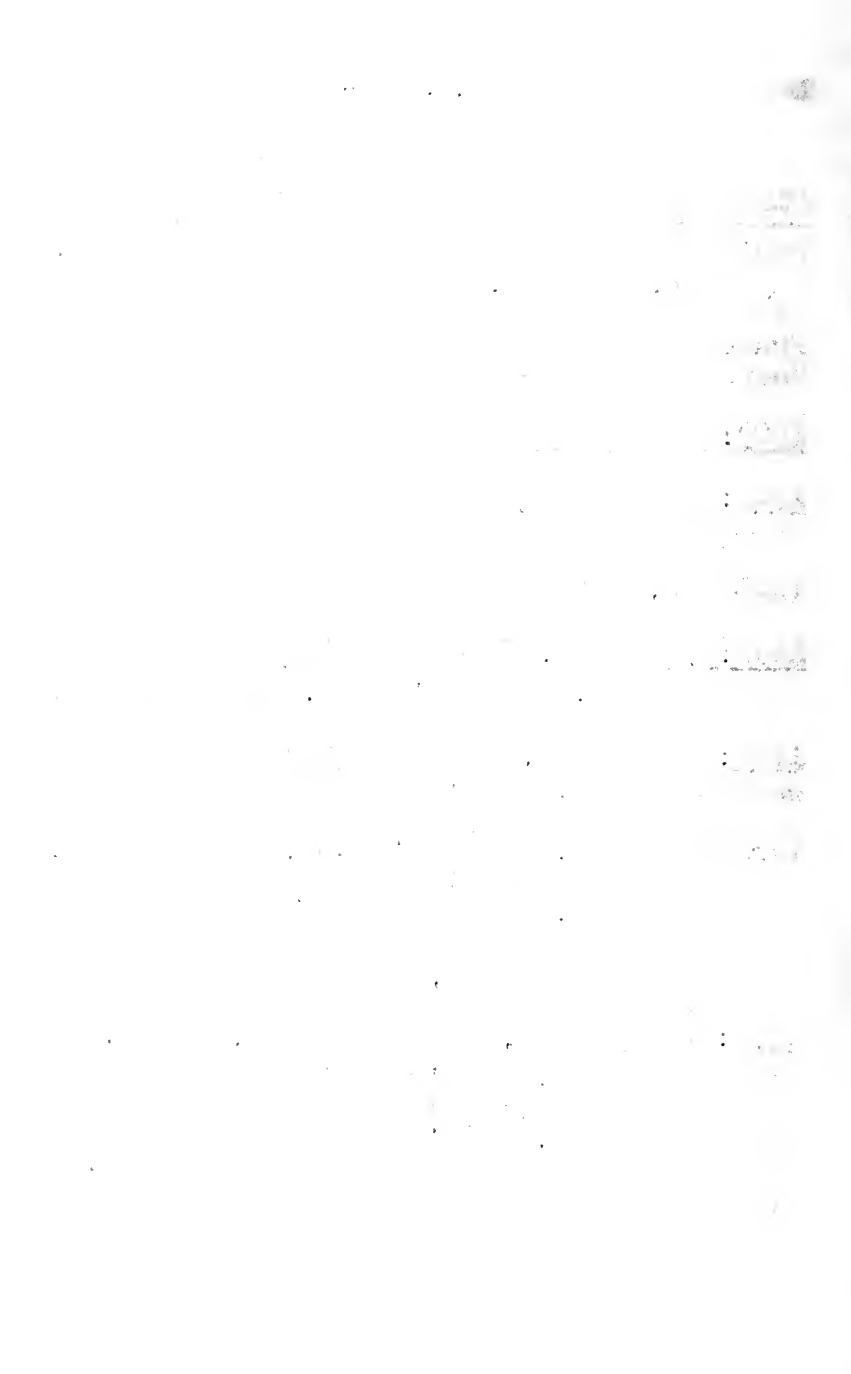
1878: 22 priests, 5 scholastics, 1 nov.

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Amherstburg | St. John's Parish | 2 | |
| | (1878) | | |

| | | | |
|------------|--------------------|---|----------|
| Owen Sound | St. Mary's Parish | 3 | |
| Sandwich | Assumption College | 5 | 3 schol. |
| (Windsor) | (1870) | | |

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|--|
| | Assumption Parish | 2 | |
| | (1870) | | |

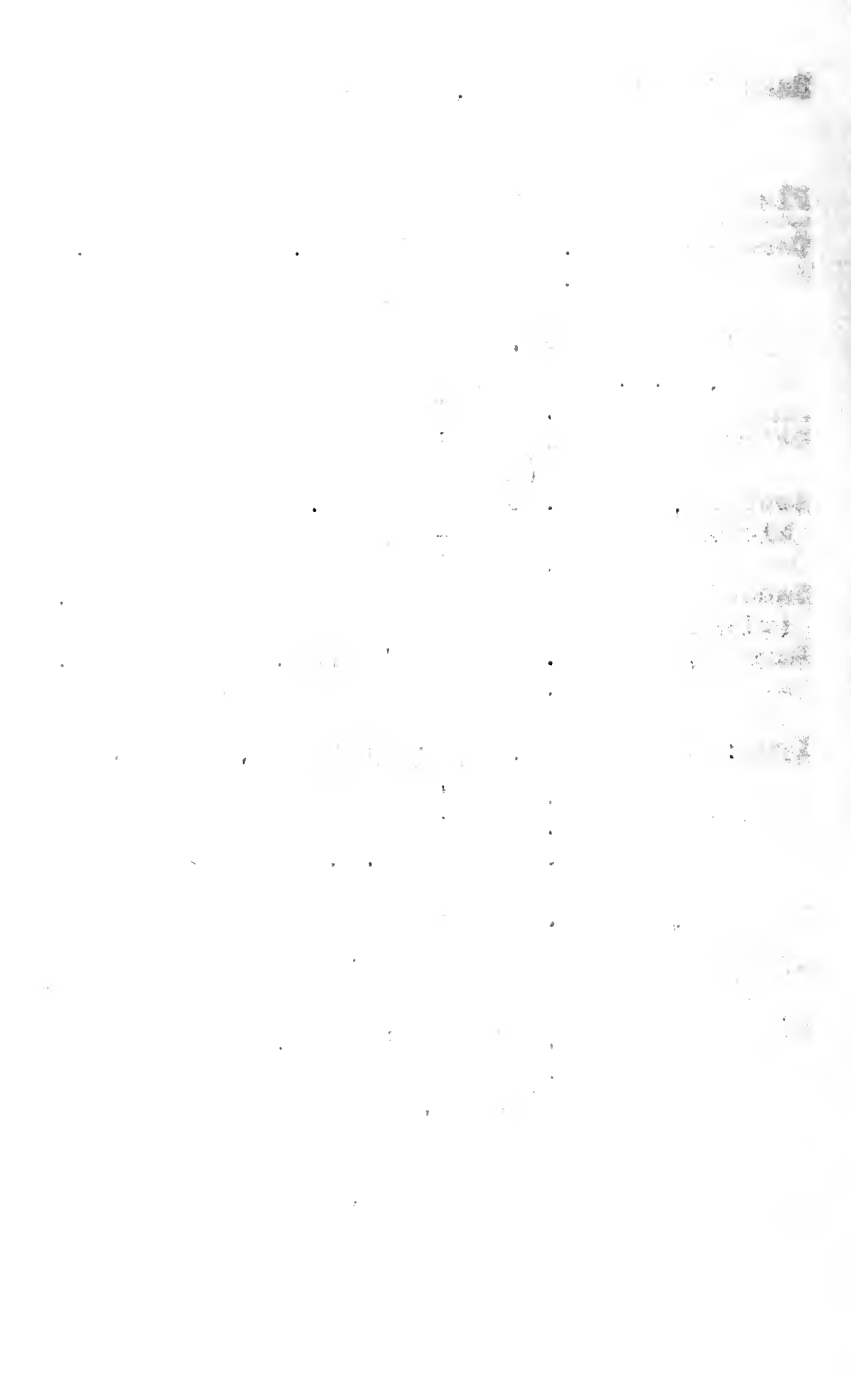
| | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|----------|
| | Novitiate, 1872 | | 1 novice |
|--|-----------------|--|----------|



| Place | Institution | Basilians | |
|--|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| | | Priests | Others |
| Toronto | St. Michael's Col. | 9 | 2 schol. |
| | St. Basil's Parish | 1 | |
| <u>1890: 31 priests, 6 scholastics</u> | | | |
| Aiken, S.C. | College, 1890 | 2 | |
| Amherstburg | St. John's Parish | 2 | |
| Detroit | St. Anne's Parish | 3 | |
| | (1886) | | |
| Newport, Michigan | St. Charles Par. | 2 | |
| | (1890-95) | | |
| Owen Sound | St. Mary's Parish | 3 | |
| Sandwich (Windsor) | Assumption College | 6 | 3 schol. |
| | Assumption Parish | 2 | |
| Toronto | St. Michael's Col. | 10 | 3 schol. |
| | St. Basil's Parish | 1 | |

1903: 48 priests, 4 scholastics, 1 nov.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----|----------|
| Amherstburg | St. John's Parish | 2 | |
| Detroit | St. Anne's Parish | 2 | |
| Houston | St. Thomas H.S. | 3 | |
| | (1900) | | |
| Laporte, Texas | St. Mary's Seminary | 3 | |
| | (1901-1911) | | |
| Sandwich (Windsor) | Assumption College | 10 | 3 schol. |
| | Assumption Parish | 2 | |
| Toronto | St. Michael's Col. | 13 | |
| | St. Basil's Parish | 2 | |
| | Novitiate, 1892 | 1 | 1 novice |
| | Holy Rosary Parish | 1 | |
| | (1893) | | |
| | Scholasticate, 1894 | 1 | |



| Place | Institution | Basilians | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Priests | Others |
| Owen Sound | St. Mary's Parish | 3 | |
| Waco, Texas | St. Basil's Col. (1899-1915) | 5 | 1 schol. |
| | Sick leave | 2 | |
| | Diocese of London | 1 | |
| 1922, i.e. 1921-1922: 63 priests 23 scholastics, 8 novices | | | |
| Amherstburg | St. John's Parish | 3 | |
| Chatham, NB. | St. Thomas College (1910-1923) | 4 | |
| Detroit | St. Anne's Parish | 6 | |
| Houston | St. Thomas H.S. | 5 | 2 schol. |
| Owen Sound | St. Mary's Parish | 3 | |
| Sandwich (Windsor) | Assumption College | 14 | 4 schol. |
| | Assumption Parish | 4 | |
| Toronto | St. Michael's Col. | 13 | |
| | St. Basil's Parish | 2 | |
| | Novitiate | 3 | 8 novices |
| | Holy Rosary Parish | 1 | |
| | Scholasticate | 5 | 17 schol. |

It should be noted that the years chosen by Father Roume happened to be years when the Province of Canada had few or no novices. Moreover, scholastics from America who were studying in France are not indicated by Table II.

The following is the documentary history of the Basilian apostolate during the years 1822-1922.

When Father Joseph Lapierre resigned his parish of St. Symphorien and moved his school to Annonay in 1802, he issued a prospectus which stated:

The Superior and Professors of the College of Annonay solemnly pledge themselves to devote the whole of their time and labor to the advancement of the pupils entrusted to their care.
(Chomel, p. 135)

At the same time Vicar General Léorat-Picansel composed a school rule of sixteen articles. The foreword began:

The head of the Institution of Annonay and his co-workers, all being priests or hoping to become such, it is necessary for them to lead a truly ecclesiastical life, that is, one spent usefully and in giving satisfaction.

Though they do not form a Congregation, or a particular body, still, they are all members of the clergy and the spirit of their vocation demands that, since they are all living under the same roof and sit at the same table, they should follow a rule of life in which prayer is succeeded by work, and work by prayer, and every moment is spent in a manner corresponding to the holiness of their state. And this is all the more necessary, because they are called upon to bring up young students invirtue even more than in knowledge, and the most efficacious means of doing so is to lead a regular and pious life. (Chomel, p. 75; Roume, p. 155)

Vicar General Léorat-Picansel was also pastor of Notre Dame Parish in Annonay. He looked upon these priest-teachers as members of the clergy and considered their teaching as part of a truly ecclesiastical life. They did not



their labors exclusively to teaching as Father Adrien Chomel relates in his History of the College of Annonay:

Their devotion went even beyond the limits of educational work. In spite of the fatigue resulting from teaching, they constantly came to the assistance of parish priests, who were unfortunately not numerous enough, and helped them by preaching and hearing confessions. It was never in vain that their kindness was appealed to for sermons on great occasions, First Communions, retreats, and even lenten stations. On the eves of great feasts, most of them went, after their class work was done, to spend the evening in the confessional, either at Annonay or some neighboring parish. For many long years they took charge of the chaplaincies of the hospital and the Ursuline Convent. (Chomel, p. 135)

When a religious community was decided upon, September 15, 1822, the letter asking permission for its organization

included a brief statement of previous practice and assured the Bishop that:

The sole end of this Congregation will be to promote the greater glory of God by the sanctification of souls through the exercise of the ecclesiastical ministry in teaching and preaching. (Roume, p. 158)

Mgr. Brulley de la Brunière, Bishop of Mende and Administrator of the Diocese of Viviers, granted their request on November 15th through his Vicar General, Aude, who wrote:

He authorizes you to select such persons from his diocese as you shall consider able to teach or preach. (Chomel, p. 144; Roume, p. 159)

During the formative years down to 1822, members of the College staff, particularly Father Joseph Actorie, frequently



absented themselves from the College to accept preaching engagements. Father Pierre Tourvieille was a junior member of the staff who knew the inconveniences resulting from such absences.

When he became involved in administration he was slow to grant permission for absences from school work. He set forth his views on the matter in a letter written to the superior of a College:

No outside work. It is a great temptation, especially to young priests, to have any outside work for it preoccupies them, follows them into their privacy and tends to tire them of what they should be doing for their boys. Schools fill rapidly when people see men remain within the limits of their home. The public wishes us to be retired and to mingle with our boys; and it is only then that it places full confidence in us. (Chomel, p. 158)

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His personal practice was to accept preaching engagements during the summer months. He was an outstanding preacher and his summer vacations were a succession of retreats and like apostolic work. He encouraged younger members to spend these months usefully. To the confreres in America he wrote on October 13, 1854:

It was not without consolation that I learned of your apostolic work undertaken during the vacation. It was in this, that after having taught and worked for the sanctification of youth during the school year that you spent the time for vacation, bringing the light of the gospel to these scattered people who so rarely hear the word of God.

When a draft of the Constitutions was prepared for submission to the Holy See in 1863, Father Julien Actorie took

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note of the change from a group of secular priests living a common life to the status of a full religious community effected by the taking of vows in 1852. He added two clauses to the specific work of the Congregation, one to protect the common life, the other to safeguard the authority of the Superior. Chapter I of this draft of our Constitutions reads:

... It takes up every kind of priestly work that is compatible with the common life and the obedience due to the Superior. Moreover it devotes itself in a special manner to teaching in colleges and to preaching the Word of God.
(Constitutions, 1863, Chap. I)

Father Jean Soulerin published a French translation of the Constitutions in 1878 which made only slight verbal changes in this article:

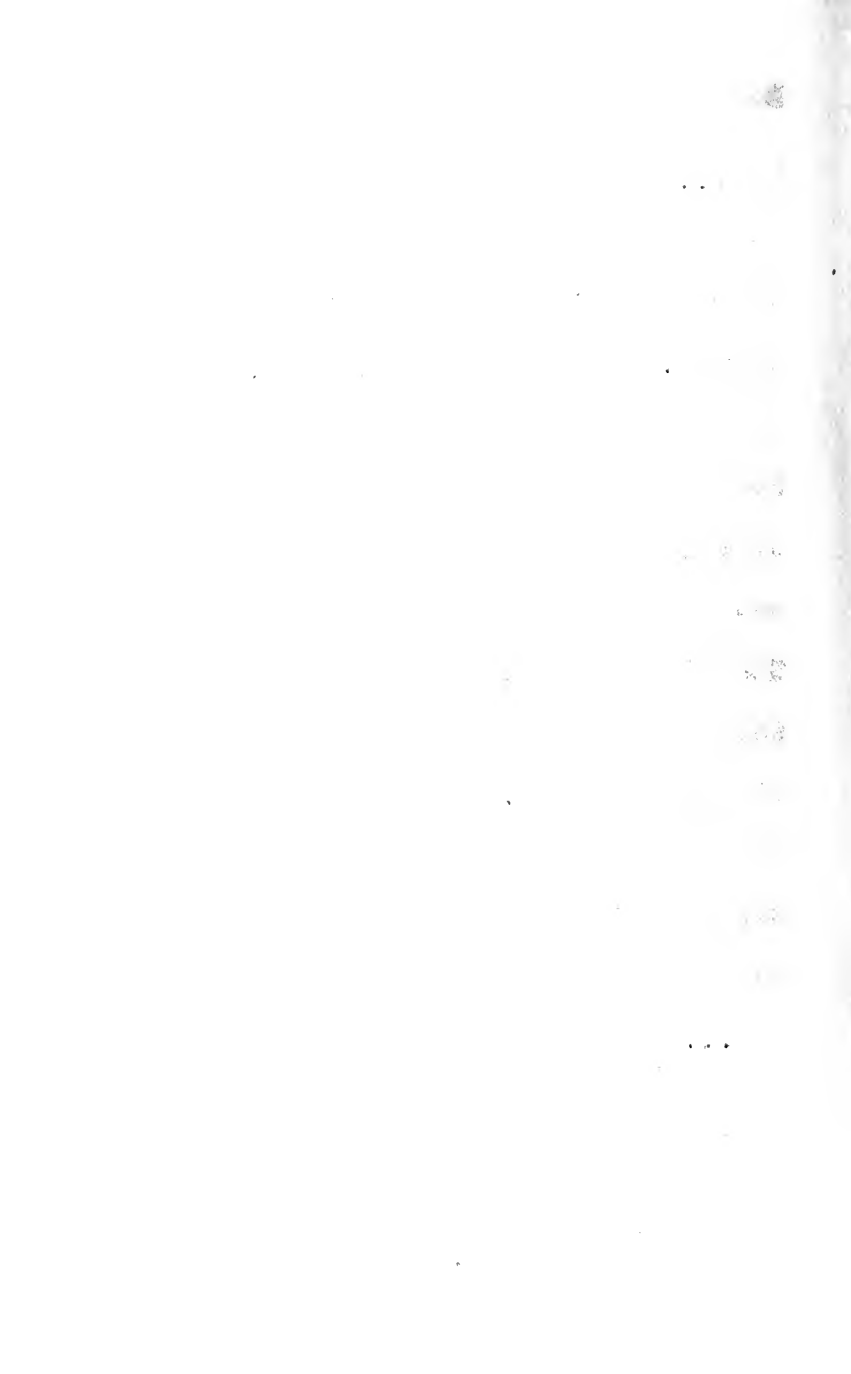
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... It takes up every kind of priestly work that is compatible with the common life and submission to its Head; and devotes itself in a special manner to teaching and preaching. (Constitutions, 1878, Paragraph 1)

Father Adrien Fayolle published a Latin text of the Constitutions in 1894 which was not distributed in the Province of Canda because it contained changes that were not acceptable to the Provincial Council. The only significant change in the apostolic aims of the Congregation was the inclusion of the word seminaries in this paragraph:

... It takes up every kind of priestly work provided it does not interfere with the common life; and devotes itself in a special manner to the education of youth in colleges and seminaries, and also to preaching the Word of God. (Constitutions, 1894, Art. 1)



The English translation of the Constitutions, published by Father Pierre Grand in July 1908, repeats this article unchanged. Shortly afterwards internal differences caused the Holy See to convoke a General Chapter to meet in Rome during the Spring of 1913 for the purpose of revising the Constitutions.

The revised Constitutions were approved for a seven year period on September 11, 1913. They made an important change in the apostolic work of the Congregation by omitting the work of "preaching the Word of God".

The secondary end is the welfare of souls, particularly through the instruction of adolescents in piety, letters and science; moreover it takes up every kind of priestly work which does not interfere with the common life. (Constitutions, 1913, art. 1)

These Constitutions were never printed and had only a limited circulation because they were temporary. When the Constitutions were revised again in 1922 the change made in 1913 in the apostolic work of the Congregation was continued so that the text which was given definitive approval on October 14, 1938, reads:

The specific end is the welfare of souls, particularly through the instruction and education of youth in piety, letters and science, and the performance of the duties of the priestly ministry of any kind whatsoever, provided they do not interfere with the common life. (Constitutions, English translation, 1956, At. 2)

In closing it may be said that during the years 1822-1922, the apostolate of the Basilian Fathers was based on the

local needs of the district where the members were working. In France the big need was for teachers and therefore the apostolate of education was exercised on a community basis and that of preaching the Word of God was left to the zeal of the individual and his talents.

Circumstances were different in Canada. Bishop Charbonnel needed priests to staff parishes and from the moment of their arrival the first Basilian staff of St. Michael's College was not only helping out at St. Michael's Cathedral on Sundays and feast days, but was also in charge of St. John the Evnaglist Parish in Weston. This was more than a

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passing need and in America the twofold apostolate of teaching has always been exercised on a community basis with confreres assigned full time to both. At the same time the preaching of retreats and special sermons by individual members has been encouraged and until recently one or two priests were a sort of small mission band. The change in the Constitutions made in 1913 has not made any difference in the exercise of preaching among the confreres in America.

(Paper prepared for the Commission on the Apostolate of the Basilian Convention, August 1966)







